

LOST CONNECTION

By

Matt Brutsche

BLACK

SUPER: Inspired by and dedicated to Scott, Layne, Chris, Chester and all those who ever succumbed to mental illness.

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAWN

Over the silhouetted skyline the sun begins to awake.

JACK (V.O.)
Over the last few years, I've
learned there are some things
empathy can't reach.

EXT. MANHATTAN HIGH RISE - MORNING

Towering elegance. Home to the elite.

EXT. MANHATTAN HIGH RISE - CORNER PENTHOUSE - MORNING

Gorgeous forty story view, statue of Liberty in distance.

JACK (V.O.)
Things I thought I knew but
wasn't even close.

INT. JACK'S HIGH RISE PENTHOUSE - SAUNA ROOM - MORNING

Framed 8x10 of the old glory days. Six Special Forces, young men in their 20s, arms over shoulders in front of a Black Hawk helicopter.

From the sauna, sweaty, one of them exits. Rugged good looks, fit, towel covering lower half. **JACK WEILAND**, 45.

Tiled floors, textured walls, pricey wall decor, this former Londoner makes the big bucks...it seems.

JACK (V.O.)
Like being a parent.

At the top of the downward stairwell, Jack incurs a dizzy spell. Rubs forehead --

JACK
Keep going.

INT. JACK'S HIGH RISE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Elegant digs. Plush sofas. Winged back chairs. Rustic tables. Modern decor.

Draped in a white robe, holding morning newspaper, Jack tends to his agitated daughter, **LANNIE**, 18, scouring for something.

JACK
Thought it was on the counter.

LANNIE
Me too.

MICHELLE, 40s, family matriarch, shuffles in half asleep with the HIGH SCHOOL TRIP FORM Lannie's been looking for.

Lannie takes it, anger vanquished. After an awkward exchange with her dad, heads off to school.

Seemingly pleased with their plight...Michelle heads to the beautiful kitchen to make coffee. As she does --

JACK
Great job you've done with the little one.

MICHELLE
Don't you work today? Please.

JACK
Each year she manages to think less and less of me. Kudos.

Michelle pays him no mind, sips her coffee, assessing.

Jack heads out to the balcony where the Statue of Liberty towers in the distance.

BALCONY

Jack sits and reads the newspaper.

JACK (V.O.)
When it comes to parents who weaponize the kid, hope there's a nice place in hell for them. But on occasion, I do have lighter medicated thoughts on the issue.

INSERT CUT: DOCTOR'S OFFICE, Michelle receiving bad news, collapsing, crying.

JACK (V.O.)
Stage four cancer, six months to live. It's wishful, mean, I know. But that's exactly how it feels when something you love is turned against you.

Beat.

JACK (V.O.)
 So unless you've been through it,
 with the utmost respect, I say go
 fuck yourself.

INSERT CUT: *Boxing match in progress*- Maniacal fans. A younger, Jack, toned, boxing shorts, British colors, goes toe to toe with a hulky German draped in his national colors --- one sided beat down on Jack.

JACK (V.O.)
 First met Michelle in Stuttgart
 Germany during a boxing match;
 when I was a paramedic with
 her royal highnesses' Special
 Operations element. Maybe you
 remember the sauna photo.

Between rounds, young bloody Jack winks at an enamored young Michelle. Her friends giggle. She blows him a kiss. Jack's corner guy smacks him, 'stay in the fight'.

JACK (V.O.)
 Would spar and fight these bloody
 pricks always on the losing end.

DING! Both brawlers leap up, Jack instantly taking haymakers.

JACK (V.O.)
 Like the one I'm on now. And in
 between the beatings, managed to
 marry one.

BAM! Hard right, Jack goes down, mouthpiece next to him. Motionless. ...*Drool emits from his mouth.*

JACK (V.O.)
 Don't even remember it actually.

BACK TO PRESENT --

Jack sits reading the paper on the balcony. The door slides open behind him.

Michelle stands there, and tall, peering out at the distance. After she confidently sips her coffee...

MICHELLE
 Leaving soon?

Beat.

JACK (V.O.)
So that's home.

Jack folds the paper up, sets on the table, and leaves.

Michelle sits with her coffee. After looking at the paper, bats it off with her hand.

JACK (V.O.)
Jealous?

EXT. STREET - MORNING

A neat and manicured fissure Jack casually strolls. Mom and Pop townhome businesses intermixed with residences.

JACK (V.O.)
Ever heard, don't judge a book by its cover? Well that applies to homes too. Because despite what it looks like, don't have a dime to my name.

Nice suit, briefcase, Jack is a portrait of content.

JACK (V.O.)
Lost just about everything in 2009 when those cock-bites at Wall Street took us all down.

Jack nods to joggers who run around him.

JACK (V.O.)
As a matter of fact, if it weren't for my pricing expert I'm about to meet, my small government business would be long gone by now.

A LADY up ahead tries to hold her little dog while get her small child in the car's backseat. Jack offers and takes the little dog's leash while she gets the child buckled in. Continues the stroll.

JACK (V.O.)
If you ever watched 'War Dogs', you might recall the pricing scene.

Large townhome window up ahead, "Rizzo Financial Advisers', Jack grins.

JACK (V.O.)
In the biz we call it, 'price to win'.

INT. FINANCIAL ADVISER RESIDENCE - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Bare dwelling, functional. Jack walks up the hard wood steps to the second floor.

JACK (V.O.)

Marie was actually my former investment manager until she went into the pokey in 2005 for exaggerating home buyer information. Minor things like employment status, wages, and actual proof of life--guess one of her applicants passed away during the loan process and disbursements were muddled. Or was it embezzled? Can't recall.

INSERT CUT: Maniacal Press, rabid, buzzing, for today's headline. MARIE RIZZO, 55, dark hair, petite, smelling free air for the first time exiting prison.

SUPER: 13 years earlier...

JACK (V.O.)

Regardless, looked pretty spritely when she got out.

REPORTER

Marie, how's it feel to be finally free, your thoughts about the current financial crisis?

MARIE

You mean serving four years for something apparently every big bank has been doing, destroyed this country, and made the rest of the world hate us for treating the financial system like a dice game? You're asking me how I feel about that?

REPORTER

Yes.

MARIE

Well I guess I'm somewhere in between a financial pioneer or obfuscating asshole whose sole purpose was to make money and screw everybody over.

REPORTER (O.S.)
So which is it?

REPORTER TWO (O.S.)
Does that mean you're
entering politics now?

MARIE
Look- I'm just hoping to get some
of that bail out money before it
goes tits up.
(tongue and cheek)
You guys know anyone in Treasury?

As the questions persist, she enters the car's passenger side
and speeds away. BACK TO --

INT. FINANCIAL ADVISER OFFICE - DAY

MARIE RIZZO, 13 years advanced, late-60s, graying, dressed
like a standby for Saturday Night Fever, shakes her head with
the financials on her computer.

MARIE
You've got to be the richest
paycheck to paycheck loser I've
ever known.

JACK
When did you start graying?

MARIE
Bite me. Look- You gotta make up
for lost time with your
retirement egg.

JACK
There's no "egg" without money so
would rather talk about contracts.

MARIE
But the IRS has programs for
dipshits like you.

Jack suddenly intrigued.

MARIE (CONT'D)
But you gotta turn 50 first.

Then incredulous, 'why bring it up'?

MARIE (CONT'D)
Glass is half empty kinda guy?
Besides, be good for both of us.

JACK
Us?

MARIE
Yeah, commission, mother fu-

Her cellphone rings.

MARIE (CONT'D)
Hold on.

Grabs cell --

MARIE (CONT'D)
(into cell phone)
If you forgot about the toilet
that's on you. Just fish it out
and use it as wolf bait.

Hangs up.

JACK
Got the latest spreadsheets?

MARIE
Yes.

Marie just stares hard. She likes to play. Finicky.

JACK
And?

MARIE
And what? I'll price what you sent
and start getting the resumes. Hi,
I'm Marie, have we met?

Jack leaves, waves bye with his back to her.

MARIE (CONT'D)
Buy Amazon!

JACK (O.S.)
Some day, Love.

Cellphone rings. Shakes her head at the name. Picks up -

MARIE
(into phone)
Yeah.
(listening)
Put'm on.
(beat)
(MORE)

MARIE (CONT'D)

Tommy, listen- I know I'm old and set to break a hip soon. But you do know one of my boys, her brother, is set to make parole soon. Yes?

(listening)

Apology accepted. Put my daughter back on.

INT. SUBWAY - MOVING - MORNING

Human sardines. All walks of life are seated, standing, or worming through the tight cabin. Jack sits among them and observes with contempt.

ANGEL, 50s, scruffy PUERTO RICAN, weathered G.I. coat, marks up a subway window with black and red markers. He writes acronym's inside the circles, squares, and triangles and then connects with solid or dotted lines.

It's graffiti to Jack who shakes his head.

INT. STARBUCKS - MORNING

Steady day. Behind the counter a pretty Latina, EVA, 30s, manages the joint with cute militant charm.

Jack joins the line with just one person ahead and is already irked. Eva hands the man his receipt and sends him on his way. Jack's turn now, cold and curt:

JACK

Dry cappuccino.

EVA

That's it?

JACK

All I ordered.

EVA

Em, hm. Three-fifty, please.

As Jack hands his credit card over, Angel from the subway bumps him. Jack snaps with condescension --

JACK

Oh I'm sorry, was I in your way?

EVA

It's okay, Angel, he's just waiting for the other nut to drop. Wait over there, Sweetie.

ANGEL
Okay, Eva, thank you.

EVA
No problem, Sweetie.

Eva's smile on Angel transforms to yuck when she's forced to deal with Jack again.

JACK
You have a boss?

As she swipes his credit card --

EVA
Tu deseas, cabeza de pato.

She hands the card back with 'screw you' eyes. Jack parries with a scan of the place...

JACK
Probably not what you had in mind growing up.

EVA
(shrugs)
I just played growing up. I wasn't sodomized by my golf coach.

Jack looks for someone who heard that.

EVA (CONT'D)
De verdad acabas de hacer eso?
Polla de aguja.

A seated Latino man snorts trying not to laugh. Fed up, Jack walks to the waiting area.

INT. HIGHSCHOOL - CAFERIA - DAY

FIFA loud Teenage eatery. Jocks in jerseys. STEM kids debating Carl Sagan's fourth dimension. Seated Cheerleaders rehearsing cheers. Demographic melting pot. Arabs, Asians, Hispanics, whites, blacks and everything in between.

Lannie sits with two other girls, AMARA, Arab American, BILLY, Asian American, all three stylishly dressed. Sit from the others at a small table in the corner.

Amara mulls over Lannie's situation.

AMARA

Well... You can always move in with me, stay as long as you like.

BILLY

Ditto. Think my parents like you more than me.

AMARA

Everybody's parents like her more than you.

Billy just looks at her, 'you done'? Then to Lannie --

BILLY

Look- My dad knows people in Youngstown. Maybe we could set something up...take your dad for a 'ride'. We have reciprocity with the Italians.

AMARA

You know, Billy -

LANNIE

Not really what I had in mind. More like, we just go our separate ways. Mom and me, him and whoever.

BILLY

It's another way to play it.
(to AMARA)
You were babbling?

AMARA

Wasn't important.

BILLY

Thank God.

AMARA

(to Lannie)
Anyway-- I think to Billy's point, keep your options open.

LANNIE

I'll do that.
(wry)
And thank you. Both of you.

INT. OFFICE QUARTERS - DAY

Through WINDOW PANES 50 stories up, glimpses of NYC. Jack breezes by cubicles filled with fresh morning faces, eager young minds.

As CEO, Jack's forged a warm small business environment fielding countless 'good mornings' to his office.

INT. OFFICE QUARTERS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Jack's small executive team of five sit down with coffees. Tight knit group. And unlike at home, Jack enjoys this part of his life.

FRANK, 55, white, weathered, proposal chief.

DAVID, 40s, Asian, thin, waspy, business development chief.

KARTHIK, 40s, Arab, neat beard, P&L Chief.

ANNE, white, late-20s, petite, compliance chief.

HELEN, black, 60s, elegant, Technology Chief.

They watch BEN, 20s, slim IT geek, bring up YouTube on the large flat screen.

JACK

This is for the training aspect we might see with some of these contracts, right Ben?

BEN

Yes, Sir. This company takes a brass tax approach.

DAVID

Fairly evident in many of these R.F.P's.

HELEN

Not much for me here, Jack. Just curiosity.

ANNE

And I'll just be curious.

Everyone looks at her, something we should know?

ANNE (CONT'D)

I've heard things. It's my job.

Beat.

BEN

So for this one, Sir, they did this in a State Prison, and how to avoid sexual assault.

Jack and the team instantly exchange looks, but not Anne, already shaking her head. Like a Spartan, Frank never flinched, nodding.

ON TV: Quick cuts, prison inmates, talking how to spot and avoid sexual assault.

MALE PRISONER ONE
 ...so for sure, conditions
 have improved over the years.
 Sexual assault 15 years ago
 ain't like it was today. I
 mean for starters, we can take
 naps now. Just not ass up.

MALE INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
 And if you do - take a nap
 ass up?

MALE PRISONER ONE
 Oh, that's yo ass. Your backside
 will feel like a paint-shaker.

MALE PRISONER TWO
 Religion. Everyone gonna come at
 you with God, religion, and a
 bible. Don't take it. You take
 that bible... They take yo ass.

MALE PRISONER THREE
 And you need to watch your
 environment - like who's watching
 you. Because when it comes to
 watching, you can't let watchers
 know, you know, they're watching.
 If you do... That's yo ass.

MALE PRISONER FOUR
 And mail. Don't let anyone get
 it, read it, or drop it off. If
 you do, then you owe. And what
 you owe... Is yo ass.

MALE PRISONER FIVE
 Money, money, money, money-
 Oh my. Don't owe money. Money
 turns into interest, and interest
 turns into a marker. And the
 collection... Is yo ass.

JACK
 Okay- I get it, 'that's yo ass',
 Not bad.

Ben turns the TV off. Whatever optimism he had...FLUSHED.

JACK (CONT'D)
Thoughts of the jury? Court?

ANNE
I will be -

JACK
You do compliance, this isn't
your lane.

ANNE
It's in my lane if one of these
Solution Integrators hire us and
we present a theme that's 'in yo
ass'.

JACK
Good point.

BEN
These guys film and create
predicated on the
requirement, the tone of the
client.

FRANK
Well whatever it is, we'll have to
be 'Johnny on the Spot'. Government
is a bit more conservative.

HELEN
Which if I heard Ben correctly,
they would tailor their approach.

DAVID
Still sounds a little risque...

JACK
Ditto. Even being associated with
this...

KARTHIK
Butt mo-les-tation...

DAVID
Butt molestation?

KARTHIK
Where I come from we soften
these kind of things -

DAVID
That's great, but when you're
the one holding the Bible -

JACK
Alright goddammit, Ben...

BEN
Yes, Sir.

JACK
Not sure about this one. Keep
fishing if you can.

FRANK
Maybe they have something at a
whore house where -

JACK
Meeting adjourned.

HALLWAY

As everyone files out, Jack is the last, and nearly runs into Lannie. Always the apple of his eye, he tries to hug her but she politely repels with her backpack--embarrassing Jack, hurting him.

Jack leads Lannie down the hallway. The employees in the cubicles pretend to be busy.

JACK'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Corner office with stunning high rise view.

Photos on the walls perfectly symmetrical: *Family events, company's ribbon cutting event, wall decor, photo of young Jack and other soldiers in Special Ops gear.*

Jack comes in first and heads for his desk. Hesitant Lannie enters and sits across.

Jack sits, settles in, stares at her.

JACK
What's the key, Lannie? Or is it
forever lost?

LANNIE
Wanna move out. Stay with a
friend, until...

JACK
Until the cancer that provides
for you and your mother is out.
That's very kind.

Lannie fidgets with her backpack.

JACK (CONT'D)
Maybe I'm the one that should've
started the fights in front of you.
Seems to have worked--I'm the
asshole, she's the victim.

Off Lanny's silence --

JACK (CONT'D)
Guess the tickle fights, horse
rides, lunch dates, movie dates,
bedtime stories, was just too
what... Is the word superficial?

Continues her backpack fidgeting.

LANNIE
Just sick of these last few years.
The way we are. The way it is.

JACK
The way it is? Me wrapped around
your little finger always kissing
your ass is the 'way it is'.
That's what you're sick of? Yeah,
I get that.

Off Lannie's head staying down, fidgeting --

JACK (CONT'D)
Never took a thing for granted.
Savored all of it.
(beat)
Knew she would blow it off the
hinges. Just a question of when.
And you picked up everything she
put down.

LANNIE
I tend to believe she reacted.
And you can't buy me, you can't
buy love.

JACK
Oh that's what it was. All the
walks, horse rides, tickle fights,
movies, bed time stories... Bribes.
Okay. Now I know. Thanks. Your
shrink help you with that bullshit?

No more to say, Lannie leaves.

Jack walks to the mini-bar, throws ice in the tumbler, pours
drink, heavy sigh.

JACK (V.O.)
 When you can look in the mirror
 and know you gave everything you
 had---with anything in life...

Jack walks back to his desk.

JACK (V.O.)
 The result is the result. Shame
 be damned.

INT/EXT. JACK'S HIGH RISE PENTHOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Digital clock on night table reads, 5:09 AM.

BALCONY

Clear night. Jack sits with the million stars.

JACK (V.O.)
 Feels like one of those stars up
 there. Alone. Orbits by planets
 we keep at bay.

Beat.

JACK (V.O.)
 Unnoticed when we disappear.

BEDROOM - LATER

Digital clock on night stand now reads, 6:22AM. Jack lies in bed, staring at ceiling. Notification DING hits cellphone. Reaches over and taps speaker so he can lie and listen.

HELEN (V.O.)
 Jack, this is Helen. Ben wants to
 show another training video taken
 from Foster Homes and Rest Homes.
 I am really concerned -

Jack turns it off. After a moment...laughs.

SAUNA ROOM - LATER

Jack's daily routine in swing, exiting sauna, sweaty. The *dizzy spell* at the top of the stairs. Rubs forehead:

JACK
 Keep going.

Jack walks down the stairs. Suddenly slips but grabs the rail just in time. Visibly shaken, continues down---*carefully*.

BALCONY - LATER

A relaxed Jack drinks coffee and reads the paper.

In his B.G through the balcony door, living room, Lannie tosses pillows off the plush sofas like grenades---angrily searching for God knows what.

Unlike days prior when Jack would help or do anything to get in her good stead, today, pays her no mind. Looks like a man that's moved on after years of being stuck.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Michelle hands Lannie the bracelet she's been searching for, then the coffee tumbler...which Lannie quickly sips.

MICHELLE

Good luck on the test today.

Lannie looks out to her father to flash her resentful eyes. She's taken aback to see only his back. Michelle implements damage control and arches her cheek out for Lannie to peck, a game they've played forever. Lannie pecks her cheek.

LANNIE

Bye, Mama.

MICHELLE

Tchuss, love.

Michelle looks out to Jack after Lannie leaves. Now what?

Something different in her eyes today, softer, ready to wave the white flag, salvage what's left.

BALCONY - MOMENTS LATER

Jack reads the paper. Pays no mind to Michelle when she sits, whose only goal is to extend an olive branch.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Can take you in today if you need a ride.

JACK

I'm good.

MICHELLE

Taking the subbie?

JACK

Em, hm.

Jack abruptly leaves.

JACK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Tchuss.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Suited, Jack walks to work with his soft briefcase.

JACK (V.O.)
Spare me with the judging. You
weren't around the last five
years. Rome wasn't built in a day
nor was this fed up frame of mind.

A jogger runs dead on line with Jack on the spacious sidewalk that forces Jack to veer off. After the jogger passes...

JACK
Sorry if I was in your way.

INT. SUBWAY - MOVING - DAY

Not as sardined today and not the only change; Jack attentive to the cabin: *Loving couples holding hands. The black man that gives up his seat for the old Asian lady. Teens joking. Smiling texters. Content strangers talking casually.*

Angel is also there scribing nodal markings on a window. He doodles acronyms inside various shapes then connects the shapes with dotted or solid lines with red and black markers.

Interested, Jack moves closer and sits.

LANNIE (V.O.)
(gentle)
Dad...

Startled, Jack looks both ways---IT WAS THAT REAL!

Seeing how psychotic he must look, Jack quickly regroups, but some passengers have already moved.

For everyone else, just another Tuesday, shrugs, yawns.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Students cramped as one big body worm through the tight corridor. Past all the congestion up ahead, Lannie walks casually with Billy and Amara.

AMARA
Anything eventful this morning?

LANNIE
Didn't even notice me today
actually.

BILLY (O.S.)
Coach Whitman.

They both look at Billy, huh?

BILLY (CONT'D)
'Member what she used to say in
volleyball?
(beat)
*'Goddammit, girls, you should be
happy I'm riding you so hard. The
day I stop talking to you is the
day you need to be worried'.*

The moral not lost to Lannie, uneasy.

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

In progress, Eva takes Angel's order.

EVA
How's my favorite Vet today,
Angel?

ANGEL
Hi, Eva.

EVA
Dry-cappy?

ANGEL
You know it.

Hands Eva some cash along with his punch-card.

EVA
You know we do this digitally,
right?

A game they play, Angel smiles.

ANGEL
I know.

EVA

All I need is your phone number.
Then I can track you, stalk you,
get on that Netflix stalker
series.

Gives his change back.

ANGEL

Not in a million, Eva.

EVA

Can't blame a sista' for trying
can ya?

ANGEL

Just for the design.

EVA

Design? What design?

He gestures to the store, functional eye soar.

ANGEL

This needs design.

Angel heads to the waiting area.

EVA

Well we'll work on it. Sound
okay? See you tomorrow?

ANGEL (O.S.)

Not if I see you first.

She smiles.

INT. OFFICE QUARTERS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Chatty and Jovial --- Frank, David, Karthik, Anne, and Helen
around the horseshoe table.

Jack at the helm, not his usual happy go lucky persona. Irked
not seeing what he needs to see. *Urgency!*

JACK (V.O.)

Should've fired all of them by
now. Only had more time.

Poor Ben, at the front, writes nervously on the WHITE BOARD
with cheeks tight enough to shit diamonds.

Words on WHITE BOARD: Information Technology. Cybersecurity. Current clients. Logistics. Cleared and Uncleared government facilities.

JACK

What are you getting at with the
'cleared' space, Ben?

Jack AMPLIFIED the question to silence the room.

ON his team: What's up with him today?

Ben slowly turns to face the music.

BEN

The NIST 800-171 compliance -

JACK

Ben...

Jack rubs his forehead to keep his cool.

BEN

Sir?

JACK

Please don't tell me what me and
our clients already know. The
intent of this meeting is the
'how'. *How* does how we staff and
recruit make us different from
the others who do this,
especially when it comes to who?

Something they've heard a million times --

EVERYONE

Prescient.

JACK

That's right.

INSERT CUT: The most regal black man in the world, **DEMECO**,
40s, laughs it up around the most beautiful horseshoe table
made out of glass with his most regal executive team.

There's a dartboard with Jack's LinkedIn Photo taped to it
with six darts knifed through. DeMeco launches a dart from
his chair and hits Jack's forehead, exchanging high-fives.

JACK (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Getting tired of DeMeco kicking
our ass and stealing our clients.

END CUT --

JACK (CONT'D)
 If it wasn't for Marie, sonofabitch
 would have all our clients by now.
 Aye, aye?

EVERYONE
 Aye, aye.

JACK
 Great, let's go get more clients.

Everyone rises. But it's Karthik's concerned look we catch the most.

INT. JACK'S OFFICE - LATER

ON JACK...like he could vomit! The source of the bad news sitting across which we can't see yet.

JACK
 What?

Karthik sits there.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Karthik... I knew things were
 getting tight, but not this
 tight.

KARTHIK
 Unless your pipeline guy has more
 in the pipe...this is it.

JACK
 And this is the best you could
 do? You couldn't tell me six
 months ago we had six months to
 live? Three was the best you
 could do?

KARTHIK
 The reports go out monthly,
 thought you were reading them,
 working on Joint Ventures,
 strategic teaming...

JACK
 Well apparently I assumed your
 triggers were a lot further out
 than three fucking months.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

You don't ask someone the day you scrape their colon if they've been fasting.

Beat.

JACK (V.O.)

This guy produces more shit than a whale with two asses.

KARTHIK

I can get you another month or two with layoffs. I'm sorry.

Beat.

JACK

You've been bringing in bagels for the last few months with smiles and coffees...

KARTHIK

Wouldn't say it was a smile, and my reimburse voucher's been out there for six weeks. It's a like a running tally now.

JACK

For what?

KARTHIK

To pay me back for the bagels and coffee. I'm not a Rockefeller -

JACK

Leave please.

Karthik leaves. Jack texts Helen on his phone. ON PHONE: Need you ASAP.

As he contemplates Karthik's shit sandwich, Helen comes in and sits.

HELEN

Jesus. That bad?

JACK

Did you know we're fucked?

HELEN

Of course. You don't read the monthly's?

JACK

Mother -

Jack calms himself before finishing 'fucker'.

HELEN

And I have to be honest. The way you been eatin' those bagels the last couple months, you'd think everything is fine. I just assumed you were working on Joint Ventures -

JACK

You're not helping.

HELEN

Well, I'm here to help.

Beat.

JACK

Fuuuuuck!

Helen looks over her shoulder to make sure she closed the door.

Silence.

HELEN

It's time, Jack.

JACK

For what?

HELEN

To go after an 'Open and Unrestricted' with no past performance requirement.

JACK

Those exist?

HELEN

We're gonna need, can you text Frank real quick -

Jack starts to send a text -

HELEN (CONT'D)

We're gonna need something in the ten to thirty million range. But yeah...they're out there.

JACK
Where do we have the best chance?

HELEN
Well...

Frank enters and sits. And?

HELEN (CONT'D)
...we're a staffing company. Not
a services company.

JACK
So...

FRANK
So it means we're stupid. We
don't "do", we "find". But we're
really good at "finding", so -

JACK
Think I'm good, Frank. Thanks.

Frank throws his hands up, 'no problem'.

Silence.

HELEN
You've been wanting to get out of
staffing forever, Jack. Now you
can.

FRANK
We have to, there's no choice.
This is the Apollo 13 of office
space -

JACK
Frank -

FRANK
There's no turning back -

JACK
Frank -

FRANK
I'm just bringing it up because the
way you've been eating those bagels
you'd think everything's hunkydory.
When in fact -

JACK
Frank... Should've been reading
the monthly reports, I got it.

Frank leans to Helen -

FRANK
Were you reading them?

She shrugs.

JACK (O.S.)
Frank!

Frank snaps to attention.

JACK (CONT'D)
Get the team back in the room in
five minutes.

FRANK
Yes, Sir!

Frank leaves. Off Helen's look --

JACK
What?

HELEN
Finding an Open and Unrestricted
that closes out in the next
month, because we need two more
months to find out if we won or
not...

JACK
Will be tough, I know.

HELEN
As well as a contract that has no
past performance requirement...

JACK
It'll be tough, I know.

HELEN
Well let's just assume we can do
that. Even if we can, we don't
know a thing about cybersecurity
or I.T.

JACK
Yes, but we know how to find
those people...

HELEN

And?

JACK

It's a surprise. We'll talk about
it in a few minutes.

Helen walks out shaking her head --

HELEN

(singing)

Down by the Bayou, where soon I
will live...

ON JACK, portrait of anxiety.

HELEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Someone get the boss a bagel.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Dump. Parking lot with more cracks than dried up river bed.

Shiny Mercedes among the parked shit buckets.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CHRIS, unshaven roughneck, 40s, thin, sits up in bed with the
sheets covering his lower half. Cement spackled faded jeans,
t-shirt over a chair. Grimy boots on the floor.

Pure glam on the other chair. Nice skirt. Polo button down.
Thousand dollar purse. High end shoes on the floor.

CHRIS

(to bathroom)

Gettin' close?

Michelle emerges from the bathroom, underwear, bra. Looks
bored, sluggishly joins Chris in bed.

MICHELLE

Works long hours. Got all the
time.

CHRIS

Better than hard hours.

MICHELLE

He does work hard, Chris.

CHRIS

Re-phrase. Meant manual hours.

MICHELLE
Fair enough.

CHRIS
Guess if I had a re-do, wouldn't
mind something a little more
mental than physical.

MICHELLE
Suppose.

CHRIS
You don't like the Mercedes?

She turns the movie volume up.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

MICHELLE
Thought you were ordering pizza.

Chris stares at her, not his normal Michelle.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Anne, Karthik, Frank, David, Helen stare to the helm, uneasy.

As Jack finishes writing a note --

JACK
Take it everyone's been reading
the monthly's...

They exchange looks as he looks up.

JACK (CONT'D)
So it should be no surprise we
got about three months to save
the company.

ANNE
You weren't working on -

HELEN
Anne...

Helen shakes her head.

JACK
So we're going after a 'Full and
Open' with 'no past performance'
and we're doing it now.

DAVID
When?

 JACK
Now.

 DAVID
As in...

 JACK
Now, David. I sent you all the solicitation we're going after before you came in -

 FRANK
I saw it already -

 JACK
Thanks for that, Frank. So we're going to need a strategy design expert, my pricing girl -

 DAVID
How come we've never met her?

 JACK
Does it matter?

Off Jack's glare --

 ANNE
What else?

 JACK
Well... People who actually know something about cyber and I.T. And someone who knows how to write one of these fucking things.

JACK'S POV: Not one look of confidence.

Anne raises her finger, gingerly. Cues her to talk.

 ANNE
Where do we start?

He looks at her.

INT. SUBWAY - MOVING - NIGHT

So CLOSE to the NODAL DIAGRAM on the subway window we can smell the ink.

Acronyms inside the various shapes: CIA. FBI. DNI. DOD. LE. SP. DHS. VG. As we've seen before, the shapes are connected by red and black lines---some dotted, some solid.

ON Angel, evaluating.

JACK (O.S.)
What's the difference between the
red and black lines?

Angel startled by Jack over his shoulder.

JACK (CONT'D)
Sorry, wasn't trying...

ANGEL
Red is where there's tension.
Black is the normal relationship.

JACK
Of what?

ANGEL
Um...

JACK
I'm not attacking it, looks
great, love strategy design.
Just curious what you're
shooting for.

ANGEL
Well- In this case- How they all
share information through their
operation centers. If all these
elements treated information as
a form of intelligence, things
would go a lot better.

JACK
You were hired for this?

ANGEL
Presidential Task Force, yes.

JACK
President of...

Angel shrugs, duh.

ANGEL
United States.

JACK
Of course. Directly? His people?

ANGEL
Both. The #2, then him.

Beat.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
I'm just fuckin' with ya.

Jack able to breathe now, nervous laugh.

Train slows for next stop. Angel waves bye and out the door. Jack leaps out before it closes. Angel is already up the stairs as Jack tracks him from a distance.

JACK (V.O.)
This guy could be a delusional,
homeless psychopath and I'm
tailing him like a pathetic mug.

LANNIE (V.O.)
Dad...

MICHELLE (V.O.)
Jack...

JACK (V.O.)
And then I got this shit going
on.

Jack stops at the steps and yells --

JACK
What?!

He stands there at length, head shaking.

JACK (V.O.)
Maybe I'm the pathetic one;
losing my mind.

Angel getting away now, Jack runs up the steps.

EXT. NYC STREETS - NIGHT

Jack uses the sparse crowd as cover with eyes on Angel.

JACK (V.O.)
 Bottom line, lost mind or not, my team couldn't write a contract to save their life right now so what choice do I have? Sure the hell couldn't be any worse. This guy could be the next Ramanujan of design strategy for all I know.

JACK's POV: Angel enters Starbucks...*the one Eva manages.*

JACK (V.O.)
 And if it wasn't bloody enough...
 The damn wolf lair.

INT. STARBUCKS - NIGHT

Jack cautiously enters to avoid Angel's detection.

Angel jokes with Eva at the register. Jack works into the line, undetected, as Angel loudly thanks Eva out the door.

Eva's adoration for Angel is warmer than fleece. But when she sees Jack...*bleh, you again?*

EVA
 Other nut drop?

JACK (V.O.)
 Jesus- Didn't see that the first time? She's incredible.

JACK
 (polite)
 Dry cappuccino please.

The courtesy knocks Eva off balance. She regroups, little guilt stricken with the insult.

EVA
 Uh- Yeah- Three-fifty.

As she charges Jack's card --

JACK
 Last time I was here... I was...

Hands his credit card back.

EVA
 Sort of...an asshole?

JACK
 That's the one. I was, wasn't I?

EVA
Oh yeah. If you're having any
doubt, don't. Total estúpido.

JACK
And today...?

EVA
Today, you're okay. Meds? E.C.T?

JACK
Bloodletting.

EVA
Nice- It's working. Not to mention,
you drink what Angel drinks, so...

JACK
Is there a chance I could meet
him?

Eva recoils a bit, regards Jack head to toe.

EVA
He won't be a sex slave.

JACK
Not what I had in mind.

EVA
Or with known affiliates.

JACK
Not in that business either, Love.

EVA
Oh, that's cheating. Where you
from, England?

JACK
Upon a time. Dual citizen.

EVA
Me too. Spain.

JACK
Dad was a G.I? Met your mother at
Rota maybe?

EVA
You got it. He was a Seaman.

She enunciated 'Seaman' in a way to amuse jack.

JACK
Aren't we all.

A beat of mutual adoration, both taken off guard.

JACK (CONT'D)
Uh- Can we talk about Angel when
you have a sec. Promise it'll be
quick.

EVA
"That's what he said"---sure.

Jack finds a corner table and sits. Eva finds herself watching
him. Shakes it off to greet the next customer.

LATER

Jack reads a paper when Eva plops down giddily.

EVA (CONT'D)
Word up, Mr. Crumpets.

JACK
Word yourself, Love.

EVA
Could listen to that forever.

Beat.

JACK
Not to screw the moment up...

EVA
Angel...

JACK
Si.

EVA
What do you want to know?

JACK
Does something I'm familiar with,
want to learn more. Nodal design
where he -

EVA
Design?

Eva recalls that from earlier.

JACK
Yeah. Think it could help my
company -

EVA
Other day he was talking about
that, how my store needs it.

She looks the store over.

EVA (CONT'D)
Looks simple enough to me.

JACK
Can you introduce us?

She stares at him.

INT. JACK'S HIGH RISE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Michelle and Lannie sit slouched on the couch watching TV.

Michelle fumbles with a LEATHER BRAIDED BRACELET in her hand.

LANNIE
Where's your husband?

MICHELLE
Out paying the bills. Feel free
to call him dad.

"Dad"? That's new for Lannie, but she holds strong.

LANNIE
I'm good.
(re: bracelet)
What's that?

MICHELLE
Something I got your dad years
ago.

She holds it up never taking her eyes off the TV, "JACK"
etched on the bracelet.

LANNIE
And you have it now, because...

MICHELLE
Found it in the trash.

LANNIE
So leave it there.

MICHELLE

Not sure.

Lannie walks out.

LANNIE (O.S.)

The American dream.

O.S, Lannie's bedroom door closes loudly.

MICHELLE

Yep.

At length, Michelle stares at the LEATHER BRAIDED BRACELET.

Eventually, she turns the TV off. Walks to the balcony door and turns around. Regards her home with her hands behind her on the door handle. Sad.

An Eerie feeling she could open the balcony door and go OVER the ledge. Hands lingering on the handle.

Eventually, lets go, goes to bed.

INT. STARBUCKS - NIGHT

Chairs on tables. Floors freshly mopped. Everyone gone except Eva and Jack, walking toward the door, also leaving.

EVA

Hey.

Jack turns around, staggered to find Eva in his intimate zone.

EVA (CONT'D)

What do I get in return?

JACK

From me? That's new.

EVA

Ah gimme a break - you're a good looking guy. Knew that even when you were a prick.

JACK

Thank you.

EVA

So what do I get?

Jack momentarily stunned by her beauty.

JACK
What would you like?

EVA
How's this. Just knowing you owe
is good enough. We'll figure it
out. Si?

JACK
Si.

She unlocks the door for Jack to leave, their eyes hold on
one another as he leaves.

Eva locks up. Walks to the back room, smitten.

INT. MARIE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Marie sits grouchily behind her computer. Jack plops down but we
can tell it won't be long, sits on the edge, anxious.

MARIE
The hell you want? That chair's
for real clients.

She takes his stare the wrong way.

MARIE (CONT'D)
Kid, haven't had a cougar vibe
since I left the pokey. You should
try Rita next door, she doesn't
have a problem with guys who have
an elevated nut.

JACK
Something is off.

MARIE
Yeah, you're nut. No biggie. To
her anyway.

JACK
I'm suddenly being nice to people
I was a pisser to and being a
pisser towards people trying to be
nice to me. Everything is just
different.

MARIE
Example.

JACK
My team at work. I think even
Michelle was trying to be nice to
me.

MARIE
Got video?

Shakes his head no.

MARIE (CONT'D)
Then most likely you just blacked
out. Or you just lost touch with
what the fuck nice is. I'll give
you an example. You think I'm
nice.

JACK
Finally kicking my team in the ass
long overdue.

Something bigger eating at Jack...

MARIE
What?

JACK
I'm hearing Lannie and Michelle.

MARIE
Well it's about time. Maybe you
guys can salvage things.

JACK
No, Marie. I'm hearing them. Like
it could be right now.

She stares.

MARIE
Are you?

JACK
No.

MARIE
Me neither. I'm satisfied.
That'll be two hundred dollars.

JACK
Marie...

MARIE

What do you want from me? Okay,
I'll play along. Look at me. Do
you feel anything different? What
do you see?

Jack looks at her.

JACK

Nothing.

MARIE

Story of my fucking life.

JACK

At least one thing is normal.

As Jack rises, incurs DIZZY SPELL, massages forehead.

JACK (CONT'D)

Bloody hell this is getting old.

As she rises, walks over --

MARIE

You okay?

JACK

One of these days I'm gonna faint
in the wrong place.

Marie gently sets her hand on the side of his arm. Jack's
dizziness passes to see her peering up.

MARIE

Sweet beauty of a coma, kid.

JACK

Where you get that from?

MARIE

Stands to reason if you faint in
the wrong place it ain't gonna be
pretty, Jack. Behind the wheel of
a car. Maybe down some stairs. Or
good old fashion muff diving on
some slut you use to avoid the
blue balls.

JACK

How does that lead to a coma?

MARIE
 Psychotic pimp, hammer. And if you think you're hearing shit now, wait till your head's been mashed. Just ask Rosemary Kennedy.

JACK
 Lobotomized?

Marie mimes a lobotomy drill with her hand.

MARIE
 Papa Joe didn't fuck around.

Jack shakes that off, gets back on point.

JACK
 You were saying something about a coma? Beauty?

MARIE
 A break from the conscious. Your wife. Daughter. This contract turning your insides out. Hell, I could use that break.

Marie grabs the hammer off her desk by the painting she's planning to hang. Hands to Jack.

MARIE (CONT'D)
 First crack if you can.

Jack takes the hammer and sets it back down.

MARIE (CONT'D)
 On the other hand-- Maybe you'll be doing what Freud said. Dreaming. About all the lovely things you suppress...repress. Hell... Maybe that's what you're doing right now. *Wanna find out?*

Marie has a GRIN no one on earth would trust. However...

JACK
 Sure.

CRACK! A thunderous slap across Jack's cheek.

MARIE
 Nope. You're good.

Jack massages his rattled jaw, angry:

JACK
You mother fu -

MARIE
Yeah, yeah, whatever. Look, my 9AM
is due in nine minutes. Bye.

Jack leaves, still massaging cheek.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

JACK'S POV, walking up: Anne, Karthik, David, Frank, and Helen outside the entrance, mostly confused.

JACK
So you guys know how this works?

ON EVERYONE: No.

JACK (CONT'D)
The Solution Integrators drop
their nets here and the expert
fish decide if they want to swim
in or not.

Jack refers to the LARGE POSTER behind them on the large easel stand: "The Cyber and IT Expo for cleared professionals"

JACK (CONT'D)
So we need to act like we're a
Solution Integrator and drop our
net too.

ANNE
Don't we need a lanyard around
our neck or something to avoid
looking like staffing losers?

JACK
Watch your little mouth, but yes.
And on that note...

From inside his coat, Jack pulls out lanyards with "SAIC" on them and hands them out.

JACK (CONT'D)
We're going to be S.A.I.C because
they're not here for this one.

DAVID
Awesome, love these guys.

JACK
No stopping us now.

DEMECO (O.S.)
Well, well, well. Look at this.

Everyone flips around as DeMeco approaches with five people of varying age, sex, and race who look great in suits.

DEMECO (CONT'D)
I was gonna ask if you were invited for this, but it looks like you're wearing the answer.

DeMeco knows they're busted, *they know they're busted*, as he looks at their lanyards draped nicely around their necks.

DEMECO (CONT'D)
Does SAIC know you're with them?

Jack signals for everyone to give the lanyards back. As he collects them --

JACK
We found them, just turning them in.

DEMECO
From your neck?

HELEN
We're getting our own lanyards and just seeing how this color looks.

DEMECO
Good one, Helen. Whenever you're ready to move on, you know where to find me. You guys want me to take those (re: lanyards) in for you?

JACK
Who invited you, DeMeco?

DEMECO
Hey, you know what---thanks for the reminder.

DeMeco and his team pull out their "Leidos" lanyards and slide them around their necks.

DeMeco waits a beat, wants to bask in this victory. Then leads his team into the hotel while singing --

DEMECO (CONT'D)
*Hit the road, Jack, and don't you
 come back -*

DEMECO'S TEAM
*No more, no more, no more, no
 more...*

Silence, tempers flaring.

FRANK
 That black, mother f -

Helen's glare stops Frank in his tracks.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 It's not racial. Any asshole that
 just did that is a mother -

JACK (O.S.)
 Does everyone have their business
 cards?

Jack has a great idea, they nod, pulling their cards out.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Alright. So we're gonna get these
 I.T and cyber experts the old
 fashion way.

ANNE
 The hell we are -

JACK
 And it's a number game. For every
 ten we make contact with, we might
 only get one--if that.

KARTHIK
 What do you mean contact?

MONTAGE - BAGGING THE PROFESSIONALS

1) Nicely suited professional experts exit their car to enter the Hotel Expo. After they've cleared their cars, Jack and his team place a BUSINESS CARD on the windshield.

2) As some of the professionals ENTER the hotel, Jack and his team quickly appear, paranoid as hell--checking for entrance for Expo security guards. They talk fast, hand their business cards over fast, walk away fast...like a Special Ops Mission.

3) As some of the professionals EXIT the hotel, Jack and his team quickly appear, paranoid as hell--checking for entrance for Expo security guards. They talk fast, hand their business cards over fast, walk away fast.

4) Inside the hotel, sitting on the shitter, a suited man grunts out his business when a business card drops over the stall. Picks it up, nods.

5) Inside the hotel, a suited female does her thing with as much royalty as any QUEEN ever showcased on the shitter. A business card slides to her nice pumps. Picks it up, nods.

6) A suited professional starts his car up and backs out into Karthik, who falls and lies on the ground. The SUIT quickly exits to find Karthik starting to rise, brush himself off. After accepting the driver's apology, Karthik hands his card over, pats the man on the arm, walks away.

7) Jack traverses the parking lot like an unapologetic madman giving his card to anyone who will take it. In his haste, notices a ten year old who took it, takes it back, too young.

8) David runs away from an Expo Security Guard who's out of shape and folds over to catch his breath. David never looked back and runs off the hotel grounds.

9) In their homes, the cellphones of Jack's team are ringing off the stand. With great enthusiasm, they write names and numbers down as it appears the parking lot stunt worked.

10) Company conference room. Jack and his team are on their laptops and phones like rabid telemarketers trying to sell Amway products. A smashing success it appears with all the High fives, riding the pony, invisible ass smacking, and any other celebration of wanton, ignorant displays of jubilation.

INT. STARBUCKS CAFE - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON, WHITEBOARD. Mounted on wall. On it, are two words in black marker: "Current Environment"

Angel stands confidently by the whiteboard while Jack sits on a stack of boxes. ...*This is it?*

Eva walks in and stops, 'okay, this is odd'. Turns and leaves.

ANGEL

I know you probably wanted to see more but it really is the pre-work that sets up the nodal work.

ON Jack, nodding, really was expecting more.

JACK
Can you run me through it.

Angel parks it on the stack of boxes next to Jack.

ANGEL
Ever hear, or ask... What's the problem?

JACK
A bit.

ANGEL
All too often people jump right into solving a problem before what?

JACK
Before understanding it.

Angel's big punch line was just stolen.

ANGEL
Exactly. So what do you need me for?

Jack gasps good naturedly.

JACK
You kiddin? Where do I start. Everything. No one can do this.
(solemn)
Where have you been my last ten years?

ANGEL
Falling.

Jack nods. Knows the feeling.

INT. JACK'S HIGH RISE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Michelle sits on the sofa, heavy eyes. Turns TV off. Lannie walks by to her room with bottled water.

LANNIE
Was I really named after Layne Staley?

MICHELLE
Kind of.

LANNIE
Kind of...?

MICHELLE

Is there a reason that matters at midnight?

LANNIE

Will probably change my name.

MICHELLE

(fed up)
It's your life, Lannie.

LANNIE

Last name too.

MICHELLE

Lannie... You need to accept the fact I'm not as perfect as you'd like me to be. You can't lie to a mirror, and mine lets me know every day I used you like a lever. All I ever had to do was pull it to get to him.

LANNIE

Maybe you were doing what you thought was best. Protecting me from his moods--rough days at the office--staying in that room for days at a time.

At 'room', Michelle's eyes go stone cold.

MICHELLE

Sit down.

Lannie sits with a knowing.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

That one's off limits.

LANNIE

It's off limits because -

MICHELLE

Lannie!

The roar startles Lannie.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Off limits.

LANNIE

Okay.

MICHELLE

Depression, or whatever it is, is like any other disease. Throw in a childhood he never talks about and...

Silence.

LANNIE

So what's left for us?

Michelle looks at her.

LANNIE (CONT'D)

How obligated are we supposed to be? Wait behind a door that never opens? Because if there's a manual or set of rules for this, would love to have it. A brother he never talks about. A mother that walked out on him. A father that drank himself to death...

Beat.

LANNIE (CONT'D)

And we're supposed to know how to navigate this? Connect dots with lines we can't see?

Silence.

MICHELLE

He works on it.

LANNIE

He works on splitting this up. That's not working on it. That's keeping this buried. So why not let him go? It's not like we haven't tried... Since ever. Or is it mandated we have to go down with the ship that won't float?

Silence.

MICHELLE

The fights have been hard on all of us. And God forgive me, it wasn't an accident. It's all I had, my only card. Wanted you to hate him at times; maybe all the time.

Beat.

LANNIE

It started before you; us. And he
needs to do something.

Michelle shrugs, helpless. Lannie goes to her room.

Michelle walks to the BALCONY DOOR and turns around, hands
rest on the door handle. The howling winds outside sound like
a pack of wolves calling for her.

Studies her home at length, sad. Hand pressure on the handle
intensifies.

Tears stream down her cheeks as her hand pressure increases.
Feels like tonight's the night.

Eventually...let's go. Goes to bed.

INT. JACK'S HIGH RISE PENTHOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Michelle, distant, Lannie, quiet, eat at the small table for
three. Both of them glimpse the empty chair.

FLICK- Stainless steel espresso machine comes to life, fills
ceramic cup with espresso. Fresh from the sauna, sweaty, Jack
appears in a white robe to grab it. Leaves like November
rain. ...*Cold.*

Lannie grabs her backpack and leaves. O.S, door closes loud.

Michelle shakes her head, this is happiness?

Eventually, Jack reappears to boil a few eggs. As he looks
for a pan and fills with water --

JACK

Chip off the old block go to
school?

Off Michelle's silence--

JACK (CONT'D)

How's your little gem?

MICHELLE

Why don't you ask her.

JACK

Nah. She'd just revise that too.
Love that shrink of hers. I'm good.

MICHELLE
Good with what?

JACK
You know... Living. What not.

MICHELLE
Why do we do this?

JACK
After this many years, what's a
few more miserable months.

Screw the eggs, Jack tosses the pot in the sink.

MICHELLE
This contract you're trying to
win... What's it do for you, us?

JACK
Moves the company to the big bucks
where the higher margins are. Pays
for us to go our separate ways;
you and your gem, me and no one.

MICHELLE
She's your daughter too.

JACK
Shh, don't tell her, she just ate.

Michelle looks at him. She's on her last fumes.

MICHELLE
You two ever going to work it out?

JACK
You made that nearly impossible.

MICHELLE
I did some things, Jack, I know,
but...

JACK
You know what I think, Michelle? I
think dead is dead. Just move on.

MICHELLE
You stopped trying.

JACK
Engines just don't stop, they run
out of gas.

MICHELLE
Is that we did?

JACK
Bone dry.

Jack leaves.

INT. OFFICE QUARTERS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

In progress, Frank, David, Helen, Anne, Karthik quietly peruse a brief. Glimpses of the familiar NODAL DIAGRAMMING we saw Angel scribing on the subway windows.

Jack watches them, keenly.

LANNIE (V.O.)
(softly)
I'm here...

Controlled, subtle, Jack shakes his head. Won't let losing his mind deter him.

REVEAL Angel seated next to Jack. Wears a hoodie sweatshirt that reads, 'Don't fuck with Mr. Zero'. Jack leans over--

JACK
Need a coffee, buddy?

ANGEL
No thanks.

Jack glimpses the suited Trans female patiently seated on the outside chairs around the table, PAM, 30s, rough, awful dyed blonde hair, bad makeup.

ON JACK'S TEAM: Heads start to rise, glimpsing Angel, Pam. It's awkward.

JACK
Okay, so now that we got our I.T and cyber professionals, Phase II begins --- learn how to write one of these proposals...

Off Jack's cue, Pam rises and walks to the front of the room.

JACK (CONT'D)
...and frame the problem with the proper solution.

Jack places his hand on Angel's shoulder.

Jack's Team regards nervous Angel and confident Pam.

PAM

Okay, so how many of you know the basics with capture and proposal, and the suggested colors for the various phases?

Off everyone's Hee-Haw look --

PAM (CONT'D)

Don't be shy.

A door opens and it's DeMeco, rude and crude --

DEMECO

Got a sec?

Jack fields looks from his team, "don't do it".

JACK

Sure.

Jack walks out with DeMeco...

HALLWAY

JACK (CONT'D)

That continental breakfast was incredible, you should -

DEMECO

Save it. Know what you did at the Expo.

JACK

We ate shitty food and -

DEMECO

You dropped your card on someone dropping dimes on the toilet?

Jack plays innocent, it's weak.

DEMECO (CONT'D)

That's sad, Man. Actually- That's fucked up.

JACK

You know what I think is fucked up?

DeMeco almost senses it.

JACK (CONT'D)
How many white people work for
you?

DEMECO
About as many that ever hired me;
don't change the subject.

JACK
What's the subject? You with no
whites, me dropping dimes -

DEMECO
One of those I.T guys ratted you
out; they didn't know that of
course but I do. And they got your
card. And the hotel has cameras...

DeMeco lets that simmer for a beat.

DEMECO (CONT'D)
But even with all that, not
really why I'm here...

Beat.

DEMECO (CONT'D)
Now that we know which Open and
Unrestricted you're going after,
which is probably the dumbest
thing you ever could've done by
telling them, wanted to let you
know, in the flesh, it's time for
payback.

JACK
That's bullshit, Dee -

DEMECO
Don't you call me -

JACK
None of us, not me, not you, not
anyone, can control how these
companies price shop until they
get the price they need.

DEMECO
That's how you took Peraton from
me.

JACK
And you with Leidos making both
those conclusions wrong.

Beat.

JACK (CONT'D)
We just got price shopped,
DeMeco. That's all it was.

DEMECO
Well I know who's bidding against
you. And I'm gonna give them the
price of a lifetime. Put you out
once and for all.

JACK
Already out. That's why I'm doing
this.

DeMeco looks the nice digs over.

DEMECO
Nah. You're not out yet.

DeMeco walks away.

DEMECO (CONT'D)
But you will be.

Jack goes back in the room, can barely gulp.

CONFERENCE ROOM

Jack sits, his team glimpses him.

PAM
...so to keep this simple, which
color is the first draft?

EVERYONE
Pink.

PAM
What color is the hard review?

No one knows.

PAM (CONT'D)
Er.. Er...

EVERYONE
Red.

PAM
Exactly. And what color blows
holes into the solution?

ANGEL

Blue.

David leans close to Frank --

DAVID
Noticed "it" used the word
blow?

PAM
Great job, Angel. Well- We
got a ton of work to do with
little time. So break up into
your technical teams and I'll
be right here in the office
the next few weeks until we
submit this response.

Frank stymies a laugh. Jack caught their exchange, irked.

Everyone walks out amped to the tits, pumped they can win.
David pulls a wary Angel with him leaving Jack alone with
Pam. These two are Veterans, no mincing of words.

JACK
So what do you think?

PAM
I think you should start looking
for a job.

JACK
Not why I hired you.

PAM
I know. And I'm going to make
your response compliant and
competitive.

JACK
So what else is there?

PAM
Reality.

Off Jack's angst --

PAM (CONT'D)
You're gonna have to get a 'Name'
with you on this. No matter how
transformative our solution will
be, brands are still brands.

JACK
Meaning...

PAM
Do you want a shoe from Under
Armour or Ted's?

JACK
Who the fuck is Ted?

Pam stares. See? Jack gets it. Pam walks out --

PAM
Let's get to work, Ted.

INT. JACK'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jack sits behind his desk expecting David and Frank, who just walk in, confused with the beckoning.

JACK
Close the door real quick.

David does, feels ominous.

Jack's all business.

JACK (CONT'D)
Can you begin to imagine what her
life is like?

FRANK
It's not a her.

Frank stands his ground.

JACK
Look- I don't want their shit
jammed down my throat either, but
we're talking apple and oranges
right now. Pam is just being Pam
and doesn't give a shit where any
of these stores put their "tuck"
bathing suits.

Beat.

JACK (CONT'D)
She, he, just wants to make a
living, have a little fun before
he, she, croaks, and probably hates
what the scumbag media perpetuates.
So fuck this pronoun bullshit and
just treat Pam like a human. How's
that?

They nod.

JACK (CONT'D)
That's the only fucking race that matters to me--the human one. Fuck what CNN and Fox call it. Okay?

Again they nod.

JACK (CONT'D)
Let's go save the company.

MONTAGE - THE PROPOSAL

1) Conference room. Angel explaining nodal analysis on WHITE BOARDS while Pam works with others on their laptops, helping them write technically. Angel's circles and squares contains words and terms: "DoE. DoS. Help Desk. 50 satellite offices. Zero Trust. Internet Access Points. Cross Domain Solutions. EOC. SOC." Connects the various shapes with dotted and solid lines - black and red. Five TECHNICAL MINIONS sit with Pam as he explains the writing they need to do. Lots of clueless nods. Frank and David stand behind Pam, soaking it in.

2) Conference room. New day, new suits. Angel and Pam work and type with their three minions on laptops. STICKY NOTES growing by the minute under the 8x10 office paper categories spread throughout the room. Categories are: "ZERO TRUST. IAP. CDS. HELP DESK. ENTERPRISE. VPN." Another minion walks to 'IAP' and slaps another sticky below it. Pam sticks one up too, "DEVSECOPS".

3) Conference room. New day, clothes less formal, simple polos. Jack enters for morality check. Whatever he said, everyone raises their hand. Opens the door for two young admin types, entering with coffees, boosting moral.

4) Angel's Bedroom. Dawn of a new day. Angel lies in bed, exhausted. Slides out of bed.

5) Angel's Bathroom. Angel grabs the BUTTER KNIFE on the sink and squeezes toothpaste on it, starts to brush. He stops, I just did that? Reaches for toothbrush.

6) Angel's Apartment. Angel, nice suit, ready to go, scans room, sure he's forgetting something. Leaves reluctantly. Seconds later, door re-opens, grabs car keys off table, leaves. Seconds later, door re-opens, grabs wallet off counter, leaves. Seconds later, door re-opens, grabs briefcase on couch.

7) Conference room. Everyone less formal, gym clothes, haggard. Everyone behind a laptop, heads down. Typing.

8) Conference room. Sea of sticky notes, ten times what we saw last time. Quality review in progress involving Pam and Jack only. Quietly reading, editing, page by page on their laptops. Behind them on the window is a pink Pacman out of stickies.

9) Jack's office. Jack behind his computer. Pam appears, utterly smoked. Jack leans back, hallelujah.

INT. OFFICE QUARTERS - JACK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Pam shuffles in and drops in the chair. ...*Thud!*

JACK
How long do I have?

PAM
Two days. P drive. Gold draft. And don't ever call me like this again. Haven't been a Spring Flower since...

JACK
Since when?

PAM
Ever.

For such a brief beat, there was IMMENSE EMOTION in "ever" not lost to Jack. Feels for her...

JACK
You are to me, Sister.

Pam becomes teary.

PAM
Thank you, Jack.

JACK
Anytime.

After a solemn beat...Pam rolls out of the chair and leaves, waving bye with her back to Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)
Two days to save my life. No pressure.

Helen appears at the door with a face long enough to devour Jack's euphoria, instantly. After she plops down...

HELEN
We lost our 'Program Manager'.

JACK
You're shitting me.

Frank appears at the door.

HELEN
To DeMeco. That black, Mother
Fucker.

ON FRANK: Didn't you give me hard time on that?

HELEN (CONT'D)
Like you said. It's not a race
thing.

FRANK
(melodramatic)
I'll come back.

Frank leaves.

JACK (V.O.)
For big government contracts, you
need what's called a 'Program
Manager' which is usually some
senior level suck ass in the
Military, Civilian, or political
ranks. Losing ours just before we
submit this proposal would be like
losing your oars just before the
white waters -- we're fucked.

HELEN
We're in the eleventh hour
here, Jack. This may not be the
greatest idea, in fact, know it
isn't, but she is a name, has
the background, and was on the
Energy committee.

Jack shakes his head, can't come to this.

JACK (V.O.)
Cindy... Boeckmann.

INSERT CUT: A man hunting COUGAR babe, late-40s, great body, CINDY BOECKMANN, takes endless selfies in sexy lingerie, then texts them to a HUNKY 18-year-old boy who loses his mind, forwarding to friends, who forward to theirs, globally viral.

JACK (V.O.)
 The disgraced former conservative
 House member who texted herself,
 naked, to the Liberal Speaker's
 son.

INSERT CUT: A stud high school football player tosses the
 ball deep for a touchdown.

JACK (V.O.)
 Five star recruit I'm told.

END CUTS --

HELEN
 If there is a defense, as we all
 know by now, he was eighteen.

JACK
 She resigned forcibly. A tantrum
 I recall.

HELEN
 Out of the Spa, who can forget. It
 was like that damn smoothie kept
 regenerating. She didn't miss
 anyone, incredible.
 (beat)
 But... She knows Energy, knows
 I.T, and her Zero Trust memo
 changed the game. On paper, this
 is a good marriage.

JACK
 I don't like the paper.

HELEN
 And I don't wanna marry the bitch,
 but what choice do we have?

JACK'S OFFICER - LATER

ON Jack: Staring at someone O.S. Conflicted.

JACK
 Tell ya what I'm struggling with.

CINDY BOECKMANN, who makes executive garb look sexy, sits
 across from Jack.

CINDY BOECKMANN
 I'm sure it's not the salary.

JACK
No, though it's a bit steep.

CINDY BOECKMANN
He was eighteen, Jack.

JACK
That day---widely reported.

CINDY BOECKMANN
Eighteen that day, six months
later...is still eighteen.

JACK
And you don't think as our
Program Manager that might
reflect bad on us?

CINDY BOECKMANN
Not at all. Surely you know who
runs the Energy committee.

JACK
I do.

Cindy brings up her cellphone as she walks over to Jack.

She scans for something, finds it. Places the cell in front
of Jack, what do you think? ...*Jack is unnerved.*

JACK (CONT'D)
So that's you. That's the
Chairman. And...

She points to others --

CINDY BOECKMANN
That's his big brother, Robert.

JACK
I see that.

CINDY BOECKMANN
His little brother, Jerry.

JACK
Not so little.

CINDY BOECKMANN
And obviously you know her.

JACK
His sister? That's just -

CINDY BOECKMANN
 It's not vile. That's why she sat
 in the corner and waited. It was
 the guys first, and then -

JACK
 I got it, Cindy, thanks. I went
 to a catholic school too.

Cindy walks back to the chair, grabs her purse, coat.

CINDY BOECKMANN
 Am I the P.M or what?

Jack stares at her.

JACK
 Yeah sure.

She blows him a kiss and leaves. Jack tilts his head, watches
 her leave. Nice ass.

INT. HIGHSCHOOL - STUDY HALL - DAY

Lannie tutors a freshman on scatter plots. Pattern of dots
 moving upward left to right. Lannie sets her pencil on the
 diagram --

LANNIE
 Is this positive or negative?

FRESHMAN STUDENT
 Positive.

LANNIE
 So then in reverse, downwards?

FRESHMAN STUDENT
 Negative.

Beat.

FRESHMAN STUDENT (CONT'D)
 What's an outlier again?

Lannie makes a dot away from the tight grouping.

LANNIE
 Something that never happens...
 (beat)
 Like when my parents get along.

The student smiles, grabs her books, heads for class.

FRESHMAN STUDENT
Thanks, Lannie.

LANNIE
Good luck.

Lannie looks at the lonesome dot, pensively.

MISS BRUSCHI (O.S.)
What's your scatter?

Italian guidance counselor, MISS BRUSCHI, 40s, sits down with Lannie.

LANNIE
No correlation.

MISS BRUSCHI
Why's that?

LANNIE
We've talked about it I think.

MISS BRUSCHI
Is that what it was?
(shrugs)
Okay.

Lannie puts her books in her backpack, prepares to leave.

MISS BRUSCHI (CONT'D)
Mother and father still...

LANNIE
Still.

MISS BRUSCHI
Everything's a lesson, Lannie.
Maybe not what to do?

LANNIE
Going on that lesson for ten years
now, Miss Bruschi. Lessoned out.

Bruschi sees a teaching opportunity:

MISS BRUSCHI
Ever heard of panspermia?

Lannie has not.

MISS BRUSCHI (CONT'D)
 In a nutshell, it's stuff that
 comes to our planet from other
 planets, setting off chains and
 chains of reactions.

(beat)

Maybe some of your mother's
 particles set off your father's
 reactions...

(beat)

And maybe some of his particles
 set hers off.

(beat)

And if you can entertain that,
 what's that make you?

Lannie has no idea.

MISS BRUSCHI (CONT'D)
 A compound of their elements.

Lannie starts to speak --

MISS BRUSCHI (CONT'D)
 Elements that both love you. So
 on the same token, it's okay if
 they split up. Elements do just
 fine on their own. In many
 cases...better.

(beat)

Especially if their compound
 keeps loving them.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Chris lies up in bed covered by the bed sheets. Michelle
 emerges from the bathroom, undies, bra, climbs in bed. Uses
 his leg as a pillow to watch TV.

CHRIS
 Wanna go?

MICHELLE
 Where?

CHRIS
 Go.

She looks up, seriously?

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 Shoot me, love what I see.

Michelle goes back to watching TV.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 Yeah- Ride the bull of misery
 until you're dead. Sounds like a
 real hoot.

Michelle slides out of bed and angrily dresses.

MICHELLE
 Yeah, because feeling dead
 inside is such an anomaly,
 right? Life is just ambrosia and
 nectar.

CHRIS
 Sweet and sour actually.

MICHELLE
 Is that right?

CHRIS
 Yeah. And at times, both can
 suck. And both can be great. But
 the balance doesn't have to be
 that hard.

MICHELLE
 Of course it is.

CHRIS
 Being who you are and loved for
 it is not that impossible,
 Michelle.

Now dressed, grabs her purse and looks at him--a sense for
 the last time.

MICHELLE
 It is actually.

She leaves.

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

Caffeine slaves trudge forward in line. Jack is near the back
 holding soft briefcase. Makes googly eyes to Eva, amuses her.

MOMENTS LATER

Jack arrives at the register. Eva glides in and bumps the
 employee away.

EVA
 Oh I'm sorry, Pete, didn't see
 you there.

STARBUCKS EMPLOYEE

Yeah, yeah.

EVA

Let me guess, Sir... Dry cappy?

JACK

Thank you.

EVA

Angel was here earlier, just missed him.

JACK

How's he looking?

LANNIE (V.O.)

(softly)
Dad...

MICHELLE (V.O.)

(softly)
Jack...

Jack reacts to the voices, instantly wishing Eva didn't notice. Not sure what to make of it, God bless her soul, she plays dumb, moves on --

EVA

Haggard. What the hell did you do to him? Should call the Labor department.

JACK

He's doing great.

Off Eva's hesitance --

JACK (CONT'D)

What?

EVA

People in your position don't normally notice people in his position.

JACK

Guess I'm not normal. Certain of it actually.

EVA

I'll give you that.

JACK

And really need that cappy today. A lot to read. Basically-
(re: briefcase)
My life's in here.

EVA

Your turn to burn the oil...

JACK

All day and night. Turn it in and hope for the best with no idea what to expect. Like flying a plane when the pilot suddenly dies. But enough of that fun, maybe see you after?

EVA

Never know...

Jack heads to the waiting area. Eva watches him long enough to see his smile fade to despair.

EXT. PARK - DUSK

Park bench. Jack slides through the proposal on the touchscreen laptop, inserting comments.

There's a small pond in front of Jack with golden ripples from the setting sun. Feels like the most serene location in Jack's tumultuous world.

A sudden *THUMP* on the bench breaks his focus. It's Eva, who already regrets it.

EVA

What am I doing here, you got this contract to save your life, and I'm...

She rises --

JACK

No, no, it's okay. Need a break.
(closes laptop)
Looking pretty good actually.
Considering...

EVA

Considering what?

She sits back down.

JACK

Considering the water is a hundred feet over our heads, we're all drowning.

They both regard the golden pond. At length.

EVA
Wasn't there a movie about this?

JACK
Murder suicide, instant classic.
'On Killer Pond'. Never saw the
garden hose coming though. Amazing
what people can do with those
metal heads and -

EVA
Will you shut the fuck up.

JACK
Yes, Ma'am.

Couple walks by holding hands. Eva makes her move:

EVA
How's your marriage, Jack?

Doesn't respond right away, too disappointing.

JACK
Paradox.

EVA
In what way?

JACK
Never knew how much you could care
without the love. If that makes
any sense.

The silence runs long enough to cue Jack to look over. Eva is
cutely terrified.

JACK (CONT'D)
Not as rare as you think, kid,
you're just young. When you get to
my age, not exactly the exception.

EVA
30 is not that young.

JACK
You were a zygote when I was a
sophomore, so...
(shrugs)
Relative I guess.

EVA
Maybe you should just go with the
flow, Jack, not overthink things.
(MORE)

EVA (CONT'D)
 If you like me, like me. If you
 got a thing for cows...we can
 talk about it.

Jack smiles, she amuses him.

EVA (CONT'D)
 You know what you are, Jack?

He looks at her.

EVA (CONT'D)
 You're money.

JACK
 Oh, you cheeky cuss, don't start
 that. Hate that movie.

EVA
 You're like a big bear, Jack.

Jack quickly loads up the laptop and rushes off. Channeling
 her inner Pepe Le Pew, Eva casually rises. Jack is now
 jogging so Eva jogs.

EVA (CONT'D)
 (yelling ahead)
 You're not hurting the bunny!
 You're just batting it around!

Jack boosts to a sprint, but Eva is younger, faster, closing
 the gap with ease.

EVA (CONT'D)
 But with these- With these claws
 you don't know how to kill that
 bunny -

JACK
 Get away!

EVA
 But I can show you!

On golden pond----It's beauty, stillness, serenity.

EVA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 We can kill that fucking bunny
 together!

INT. EVA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eva's clothes lie on the floor leading to the bed.

Jack's clothes too, but he now sits in the corner, boxers, t-shirt, laptop up, anxiously sliding through the proposal.

Eva asleep under the covers.

JACK (V.O.)
 Life can be ironic. Spent the last ten years building something for something I lost in the process. Or was it always lost?

MICHELLE (V.O.)
 (gentle)
 We're here, Jack.

JACK (V.O.)
 And then there's that. Projecting God knows what and why.

Jack regards Eva.

JACK (V.O.)
 What is she? Balance? That patch of roses in the middle of the woods I should stop and enjoy?

Back to the laptop, Jack inserts another comment.

JACK (V.O.)
 Fact is, who wants to smell roses when you're broke? Live on the street? I'm not saying money is everything, just don't tell me it's nothing.

Jack closes the laptop and quietly walks for the balcony careful not to wake Eva.

JACK (V.O.)
 Passion is always a tricky thing. It truly begs the bigger question. How many things can we be passionate about and still succeed?
 (big breath)
 Hell if I know.

BALCONY

Jack sets everything down on the table like he's preparing a military operation center: Opens laptop. Opens laptop case to pull out his cellphone and small stand, sets phone on it. Pulls out legal paper and two pens.

Dials up his team on the Laptop.

JACK (V.O.)
 Of course, today is a no-brainer.
 No time to smell roses. A contract
 to win. And my opponent is
 inexperience, scale, and some
 rabid black man who wants to brain
 me. Ten seconds to go and I'm
 taking the final shot. No biggie.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

ON JACK'S LAPTOP MONITOR -- seven groggy faces: Karthik,
 Anne, Helen, Pam, David, Frank, Angel, Ben. Half of them in
 PJs, all of them with coffee. Patiently waiting on...

Jack. Who finishes writing a note.

JACK
 Sorry to wake everyone so early
 but today's the day obviously.

The mummies nod, sip coffee.

JACK (CONT'D)
 I've got the 'gold' version back
 online for everyone to take a
 look, make final edits. Run it
 all through Pam -- who by the way
 got the big name we need for our
 partner -- General Dynamics.

VTC applause, Pam humbly waves it off.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Pam, my girl who does the pricing
 will get those final numbers
 uploaded by ten.

PAM
 Okay, because the response is due
 at 1PM, and not a second over. The
 portal closes promptly at one.

DAVID
 So the only worry is what
 DeMeco's doing and with who.

JACK
 He's got his pricing expert, I got
 mine, may the better geek win.

HELEN
 Any issues with the concepts,
 technical diagrams?

JACK
Nothing you can't handle, Helen,
just minor edits on Angel's nodals.

FRANK
The 'Transition In'?

JACK
Needs another look, our 60-day
point is lagging. And the cyber
security architecture could use
more meat, with resiliency,
detection, mitigation, blah blah.

DAVID
The training aspect?

Jack's 'cringe' word.

JACK
Ben...

BEN
Yes, Sir...

JACK
Go out to Homeland's site to see
if FEMA has a national level
exercise this year.

BEN
Yes, Sir.

JACK
If they do, tie that back to Energy
to demonstrate we get their
interagency training element.

PAM
Very nice.

BEN
Got it.

JACK
For everyone else, just go ahead
and get going. I'll be in later
to put this to bed. Ay, ay?

EVERYONE
Ay, ay.

Jack closes laptop, he's worried. Takes in the night's
million stars for a much needed peaceful distraction.

EVA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Dressed, Jack stands over Eva, conflicted. She awakes...

EVA
Your money's on the dresser.

He smiles.

EVA (CONT'D)
Two eggs, over medium, slice of
bacon, and one of those bloody
crumpets you keep talking about.

Sits next to her, brushes her hair.

JACK
Gotta get going. Judgement day.

EVA
Good luck.

JACK
You know I'm too old for you,
right?

Some dark truth in there for Jack.

EVA
Let me worry about hospice.

Jack leans over and kisses her forehead. He leaves. Eva slides out of bed, wraps the blanket around her.

EXT. EVA'S BALCONY - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Eva takes in the stars.

INT. JACK'S HIGH RISE PENTHOUSE - MORNING

Lannie darts around looking for something, late for school.

Michelle sits distantly at the small table in the kitchen. Her back is to Lannie.

Jack walks through the front door---haggard but anxious. Ignores them and heads to the back room.

Lannie huffs and puffs over to her mother.

LANNIE
You think this asshole was at the
office all night?

Whatever SECOND THOUGHTS Lannie was having from her talk with Ms. Bruschi ----- has officially evaporated.

MICHELLE

For the last time, it's about you
and him -- not me and him.

Lannie storms off for her father.

MICHELLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hey!

Michelle's tone stops her instantly. Lannie turns around to see Michelle standing -- the Lioness' last stand.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

For every action, there's a
reaction. Whatever you do now, be
prepared to live with it. Because
with him... When he shuts down...
That's it. The valve doesn't open
again. Got it?

Channeling through like a dare, Lannie storms off.

JACK'S BEDROOM

Sitting on the bed, Jack barely reacts when Lannie bangs the door open, plaster falling from the ceiling. Takes in the new flakes on the nice hardwood floor.

JACK

Getting sick of the sweeping.

LANNIE

Think I hate you.

JACK

Think I don't give a shit. But
hey, revise that too. That shrink
of yours is tip, Top.

LANNIE

Such a loser, waste.

JACK

And to think we were on the cusp
of something.

LANNIE

When you stay out all night we're
not on the cusp of anything.

Jack notes the time on his watch. He's late. Talks and walks to the dresser and closet.

JACK
That's a pity. Because our thing should have nothing to do with the other thing.

LANNIE
That thing being my mother?

JACK
Yes.

LANNIE
Not respecting her is something I shouldn't be concerned with?

JACK
That's not what I was doing, Lannie.

LANNIE
You really are fucked up.

He stops and looks at her --

JACK
When you graduate highschool, you need to do me a proper favor.

ON LANNIE'S GLARE: Hurry up asshole.

JACK (CONT'D)
You need to... Fuck off.

Jack gets back to what he was doing.

LANNIE
Can do that sooner if you want.

JACK
Don't tease me.

She storms out.

LANNIE (O.S.)
He's a piece of proper shit!

The front door slams thunderously. More plaster hits the hardwood floor.

Jack heads for the shower.

JACK (V.O.)
How much fuckery are we supposed
to take? Who the hell knows.

Jack starts to slide his shirt off.

INT. OFFICE QUARTERS - BEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Above the door frame, the clock reads 12:30. We can feel the immense pressure before we see anyone --- DUE 1PM SHARP.

Nervous Ben types feverishly on laptop. Angel and Pam hover behind him, their hands reassuringly on his shoulder.

ANGEL
Complicated business, isn't it?

PAM
Government likes it that way. If you can't even meet a simple 1PM suspense, then why would they give you thirty million dollars to complete projects with other timelines.

BEN
Can't get one thing wrong. Not even the damn cover letter.

ANGEL
Really...

BEN
Well maybe not the cover letter, but...

Angel checks the time, heart rate picks up.

BEN (CONT'D)
How we doing?

PAM
Plenty of time. Thirty minutes.

When Jack anxiously enters, Pam takes a step back so Jack can park behind Ben's shoulder.

JACK
How we doing, edits all done?

BEN
Beauty of SharePoint, Boss. Just
uploading to portal now, blah
blah.

JACK
Nothing fancy. Just a simple,
"thanks and can be reached
anytime", blah blah.

ANGEL
You guys do that a lot?

JACK
What?

ANGEL
Blah, blah?

JACK
(duh)
Yeah, saves time.

BEN (O.S.)
Shit!

JACK
What?

BEN (O.S.)
Lost connection!

JACK
What?!

Seven shades pale, Jack, Pam, and Angel frantically check
their cellphones.

JACK (CONT'D)
Anything, Angel?

ANGEL
Nothing.

JACK
Dammit! Ben, grab it, let's go!
This is bloody not happening!

Jack rushes out. Ben unplugs the laptop, runs after him.
Angel crosses himself, kisses hand with a gesture to God.
Figuring God can't hurt right now, Pam does the same.

ELEVATOR

Jack and Ben rush in. Jack hits next floor down while Ben hits "1" floor.

JACK (CONT'D)
If this is Karma, what the hell
did I do.

Door opens, Jack pops out, yells to someone O.S --

JACK (CONT'D)
Bryan, you guys down too?

PETE (O.S.)
Yeah, not a single G.

Jack jumps back in, door closes, down they go.

BEN
We're doing okay, we're doing
okay. We got 20 mins. We got 20
mins.

On Jack: Really? Rain Man?

JACK
How's your dad with the car, lets
you drive on Tuesdays?

INT. MAIN LOBBY FLOOR - DAY

A *BLOB*, of suited professionals wait for a door to open.

When the door opens, they split like the Red Sea to avoid Jack and Ben thundering towards the revolving front doors.

EXT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Jack and Ben spin free from the revolving doors, checking phones for a signal.

BEN
(off look)
Anything?

JACK
Not a fucking thing! What is
this?!

Verizon truck suddenly pulls up, Jack darts for it.

VERIZON TRUCK LOCATION

A TECH steps out, pounced on by --

JACK (CONT'D)
Is it just here?

VERIZON TECH
Not sure.

For the first time, Jack notices the cellular Zombie apocalypse -- pissed off shuffling cellphone users. They use their arms like 5G antennas to get a signal.

VERIZON TECH TWO (O.S.)
Bigger I heard.

Second TECH slides side door open.

JACK
What do you mean?

VERIZON TECH TWO
Heard it's the whole block.

JACK
What?!

Jack turns to Ben and roars like Leonidas:

JACK (CONT'D)
Follow me!

Ben closes laptop and tucks it like a football and runs after Jack across the street, cars skidding to a halt.

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Starbucks approaching, Jack slams the shoe-breaks.

INT. STARBUCKS - CONTINUOUS

Jack rushes in, hollers:

JACK
Signal?!

SEVERAL PATRONS
No!

EXT. STARBUCKS - CONTINUOUS

Bursting out, Jack tries to place Ben: Where the hell is he? Ben finally breaks free of the crowd, huffing, puffing.

JACK
Follow me!

Jack runs off. After a deep breath, Ben runs after him.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Verizon truck stops, techs roll out with zero urgency -- *like they're union*. Jack arrives diametrically opposite. Rabid:

JACK
Is it the whole block?

VERIZON TECH
We're hearing it's the whole square, Chief.

JACK
What the hell's a square?!

Calmer, the tech addresses the other tech sliding door open.

VERIZON TECH
Tommy?

VERIZON TECH TWO
Yeah.

VERIZON TECH
How many blocks in a square?

VERIZON TECH TWO
Depends.

JACK
How about Manhattan - where we're fucking standing?!

VERIZON TECH TWO
Whoa, whoa, whoa, Chief.

Tech Two in Jack's face before he can blink.

VERIZON TECH TWO (CONT'D)
My wife's new husband talked to me that way -

VERIZON TECH (O.S.)
Not your wife anymore, Tommy.

VERIZON TECH TWO
Want the number to his hospital?

Off Jack's pleading eyes --

VERIZON TECH TWO (CONT'D)
A square is four blocks, Chief.
Four square blocks.

Jack looks at Ben. The Endgame! In a blur, grabs Ben's laptop and sprints off --

BEN
The password!

-- and vanishes around the corner. TECH TWO pulls the TEAM RADIO off his belt:

VERIZON TECH TWO
(into radio)
Zone two, you there?

VERIZON TECH (V.O.)
(over speaker)
Zone two here.

VERIZON TECH TWO
Some rabid looking asshole is
hightailing it your way.

VERIZON TECH (V.O.)
(over speaker)
And?

VERIZON TECH TWO
Fuck with 'em if you can.

VERIZON TECH (V.O.)
(over speaker)
Roger that, zone one.

Tech two sees Ben staring at him, disbelief. How could you?

When the Tech smiles, Ben runs off.

SERIES OF SHOTS

1) Jack jumping up on water fountain ledge to detour the thick crowd...his old military training kicking in.

2) Jack sprinting past another street, another block.

3) Jack weaving through thick crowds.

4) Jack being nimble and Jack being quick, darting out to streets, back to sidewalks, over and over, whatever it takes to advance.

5) Spotting another Verizon truck, Jack runs faster.

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Two techs jump out of their Verizon van, pounced by --

JACK (O.S.)
You familiar with squares?

One of the TECH'S is Jersey hard core:

VERIZON TECH
You familiar with your ass you
son of a bitch? Gonna ask me
about circles too?

Before Jack knows it, both TECHS in his face.

JACK
I meant no disrespect. I was told
this is a square problem. Just
need to know where it ends.

One TECH suppresses a laugh.

JACK (CONT'D)
What?

VERIZON TECH
Buddy- It's a 'spea'.

JACK
A spee-uh?

VERIZON TECH
Yeah. Special Purpose Electronic
attack. Whole island is down. Like
an umbrella was put over it. We're
hearin' it was the Russians. Ain't
no one getting a signal until this
attack is over.

Devastated, Jack never notices the TECH holding his laugh.

VERIZON TECH (CONT'D)
I'm just fuckin' with ya buddy,
gotta learn to relax.
(pointing across street)
(MORE)

VERIZON TECH (CONT'D)
 The next square starts right over
 there and they have plenty of
 signal. The place with that
 Barracuda sign.

Jack runs off. Grinning, the TECH pulls the Team Radio up --

VERIZON TECH (CONT'D)
 (into radio)
 Zone one, you there?

VERIZON TECH (V.O.)
 (over radio)
 Zone one, here.

VERIZON TECH
 (into radio)
 Mission complete.

VERIZON TECH (V.O.)
 (over speaker)
 Thank you, zone two.

VERIZON TECH
 Over and out.

The two TECHS chuckle as they open the side door, slapping
 each others backs.

EXT. BARRACUDA BAR - SECONDS LATER

The word 'Barracuda' on a overhang. Jack comes in like a jet.

INT. BARRACUDA BAR - CONTINUOUS

When Jack enters...Heart's "*Barracuda*" greets him with a
 deafening blare.

Gorgeous women in tight undies dance on small tables for
 suited clientele. They also have ... *bulges in their panties.*

Best of the best in the 'Trans' game, the 'Barracuda'.

Jack rushes for the bar-counter never noticing.

Bartender, male, 30s, t-shirt with a mule that reads 'I'm a
 smart one', has a cool cowboy hat that looks like it was made
 out of a US Flag.

JACK
 I'll give you three hundred bucks
 to use your wi-fi.

BARRACUDA BARTENDER
 Just log in, let me know when
 you're ready. On the house.

Jack notices the time on the clock. 12:57. Quickly opens
 laptop --- *INSTANT DEVESTATION!*

On screen: Login - BenJohnson
 Password -

JACK
 No! Fucking! Waaaaay!

BARRACUDA BARTENDER
 You okay?

Jack's entire life, down the drain. Folds over. Could vomit.

BEN (V.O.)
 You ready?

Like a defib, Jack flicks back to life. Sweaty Ben sucking
 wind as Jack clicks on the password field:

JACK
 Let's go!

BEN
 It's one-Q through four-R then
 again with the shift.

Jack quickly does, he's in. Brings up wi-fi password.

BARRACUDA BARTENDER
 Ready when you are.

BEN (O.S.)
 60 seconds boss.

JACK
 (typing)
 Life time. Ready.

BARRACUDA BARTENDER
 It's all one word: *I love my chic
 with a stick.*

Laser focused, Jack types it in.

JACK
 Shit!

BARRACUDA BARTENDER
 Sorry- The "I" is an exclamation.

BEN (O.S.)
20 seconds.

Jack's in. Frantically brings up email, talks as he types --

JACK
Dear Mr. Smith, attached is our
proposal. Thank you for the
opportunity. Sincerely- Jack
Weiland. Done! Transmit!

Jack in horror when he sees the time: 15 seconds past 1:00
o'clock

BEN (O.S.)
A little fast, Boss. We're okay.

Jack instantly relieved. Ben notices someone O.S.

BEN (CONT'D)
Roxanne- Is that you?

Ben walks off. Jack and the Bartender share a look. Bartender
twists beer cap off, hands to Jack.

BARRACUDA BARTENDER
Bet he comes across differently
at work.

Jack drinks the beer.

JACK
Always do, brother.

INT. OFFICE QUARTERS - JACK'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE on wrist watch, time check, Jack displeased, waiting.
Tie loosened. *...Been a rough day.*

MICHELLE (V.O.)
Jack...

Just when he thought he was clear of this, Jack looks around.
Sad as it is dejecting.

Someone at the door makes it only worse.

JACK
You have got to get a life man.

Smiling with a knowing, DeMeco walks in and sets a folded
piece of paper on the desk. DeMeco sits down as Jack picks it
up, confused.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Prices for the Program managers
 and the K-P...

DEMECO
 That's right. What were yours?

Jack jumps on his computer. DeMeco scans the room with an evil joy. Line by line, Jack compares the prices. ...*Not good.*

DEMECO (CONT'D)
 Guess you made that 1PM deadline
 for nothing.

Off Jack's ruined life --

DEMECO (CONT'D)
 Look at the bright side. At least
 you don't have to wait now---ponder
 the what if.

Satisfied, DeMeco leaves.

JACK (O.S.)
 How's your diversity over there
 at Prescient?

DeMeco stops, turns around. Jack stands, hands in pockets.

DEMECO
 As diverse as it was for me.

JACK
 Two wrongs make a right?

DeMeco shrugs.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Would you know why, even care,
 why my team is diverse?
 (beat)
 Because I don't believe in
 equity.
 (beat)
 Not with the actual hiring. Best
 person for the job, period.

DEMECO
 You don't think there's a place
 for diversity?

JACK
 Sure. If they're the best person.

Beat.

JACK (CONT'D)
But I do believe in equity with
the interview process. Men,
women, all ages, races, even
Latinos and Asians.

DEMECO
You say that like it means
something.

JACK
Oh you haven't heard? According to
the media, there's only black and
white in this country. No Arabs,
Italians, Asians, Indians, and
Latinos. Just us. And how we hate
each other apparently - always
repressing the other - which is
called reverse when you do it. Who
the fuck came up with that?

Silence. DeMeco needs it, thinking.

JACK (CONT'D)
No one I know, black or white,
buys into the media's bullshit.
If anyone needs defunding, it's
those mother fuckers. I mean,
DeMeco...

He has DeMeco's attention.

JACK (CONT'D)
Haven't you noticed their ad
revenue triple and triple the last
couple years? Because this is the
truest thing you'll ever hear...

Beat.

JACK (CONT'D)
Those mother fuckers know what
sells. Hate. Divisiveness. And I
have none of that for you. Even
if you did end me.

No more to say, DeMeco leaves. Jack sits.

After a moment, David enters.

DAVID (O.S.)
 Sorry I'm late, Boss. Heard you
 and Ben had quite a moment.

JACK
 We did.

David sits, knows his tenure is in the balance.

JACK (CONT'D)
 You know, Dave- I never knew how
 this was going to shake out with
 Angel. Half the first round picks
 are always duds. This wasn't
 about rubbing it in with you.
 That's what ugly people do these
 days -- probably look at a guy
 like Angel and say...

HALLWAY - OUTSIDE JACK'S DOOR

Angel arrives, hesitant to interrupt, listens for an opening to
 share something with Jack -

JACK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 ...how does it feel some Spic off
 the street can do what you do?

Angel could implode in tears. Rushes off.

JACK'S OFFICE

JACK (CONT'D)
 Most of us sick of this
 divisiveness, this labeling.

Off David's look --

JACK (CONT'D)
 This was always genuine. I see
 something in Angel.
 (considers)
 So let's do this... Let's win
 this thing. And if we do...

Off Jack's daze --

DAVID
 What?

JACK
 DeMeco... Low balled the shit out
 of it. Probably not good for us.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - STUDY HALL - CONTINUOUS

Lannie reads a book, stops. Something feels off. Pulls her cellphone up, scrolls down the list until, 'Mom'. Hesitant to dial.

INT. TRUCK - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Decrepit clunker. Michelle's lover, Chris, behind the wheel. Something feels off, pulls over.

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Angel, brisk walk, emotional, worms around pedestrians desperate to get home.

JACK (O.S.)

Angel!

Angel stops and turns back. Jack hunched over, gassed.

JACK (CONT'D)

Just let me say something. Then you can hit me, beat me, sue me, demand a raise, or just bloody quit. But let me say this.

Beat.

JACK (CONT'D)

What you heard was a bad example of the bullshit in this world. The hard truth how people tag each other lately, maybe always, hell I don't know. I've gouged for everything in my life, just like you. I don't think that way, don't speak that way, and I cannot believe you arrived at the exact moment I said that.

(wry plead)

Are you serious, Man?!

After a long beat...Angel grins forgiveness. Relieved, Jack pulls him in for a hug. After the embrace, something occurs to Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)

Wow.

ANGEL

What?

JACK
Live in this area.

ANGEL
Really?

In the distance, a swell of people behind YELLOW TAPE. Police on scene. Ambulances.

It's all in front of his high rise. Jack drifts to it, numb.

ANGEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You okay?

JACK
See you tomorrow?

ANGEL
You will.

Jack continues on. Angel watches, concerned.

INT. TRUCK - PARKED - CONTINUOUS

As if he already knows, Chris exits the truck. Drops the tail gate and sits. Regards the setting sun like it's Michelle.

INT. HIGHSCHOOL - STUDY HALL - CONTINUOUS

Lannie stares at her cell contact, "MOM". Scared to dial.

EXT. NYC STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Paramedics slide the moving Gurney, white sheet over Michelle's BODY, into the ambulance.

Jack, fearful, is near the YELLOW TAPE, behind the nosey swell.

JACK'S POV: Police officer approaching another officer with something from the scene. LEATHER BRAIDED BRACELET. The other can see there's an etched name.

POLICE OFFICER
What's the name?

POLICE OFFICER TWO
Looks like... Jack.

Jack melts in the B.G...

POLICE OFFICER
Let's go to the front desk.

A stunned Jack drifts from the swell, breath shortening,
going to a knee.

ANGEL (O.S.)
Are you okay, Boss?

Jack rubs his chest.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Call 911! 911!

Down goes Jack...FADING TO BLACK.

ON BLACK.

PRE-LAP: Mechanical conveyor in motion, an intense fire
builds up.

INT. WITNESS CREMATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

INSIDE FURNACE...swirling flames engulf a wooden coffin.

In progress is a small, private funeral service. Jack looks
like he's still recovering with an ashen face. Michelle's
parents, late-60s, sadly watch the inferno, unlike Lannie,
who seems to harbor anger.

Jack's distinguished looking older brother, WAYNE, 60s,
stands from the pack observing Lannie over the others.

INT. JACK'S HIGH RISE PENTHOUSE - PERSONAL DEN - NIGHT

Wayne hands Jack a drink and sits next to him, regards Jack's
apparent success. At some point he quips --

WAYNE
'Pin the blame on Jack' yet?

Jack sips his drink. Wayne drinks his in one gulp and rises
to make another.

JACK
That was quick.

WAYNE
Ode to the Irish genes.

JACK
You should head back tomorrow.

WAYNE
 (pouring drink)
 Tonight actually.

Even for Jack that was a surprise, glimpses Wayne as he sits.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
 But you didn't answer my
 question.

Marble shows more emotion than Jack.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
 Know that look.

Beat.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
 Looks like Lannie does too.

Jack blurts a laugh and it's genuine.

JACK
 Ahh, the sweet bliss of
 absenteeism. That was good. Thank
 you. Don't know how you did it,
 but damn that was good. Rarely
 get to do that, danke.

WAYNE
 In error I take it.

JACK
 Brother, by all means...if you
 think granite can cry, all yours.

WAYNE
 Wonder where she gets it from.
 Marble just breaks into more
 marble.

JACK
 Leaving tonight, or now?

WAYNE
 Grief should normally precede
 anger. Not what I saw. What I saw
 is a little girl on the same path
 as her mother.

JACK
 Been doing that for years.

That was harsh, Wayne looks at Jack.

WAYNE
New breed of lion.

JACK
Life's too short.

WAYNE
Father's heart attack taught us
that.

JACK
You attacked it alright.

The dig is not surprise to Wayne, dry laughs.

WAYNE
I was wrong about the lion.
You're a fucking monster.
(beat)
What was I supposed to do?

JACK
What you were asked to.

WAYNE
So let me get this straight...

INSERT CUT: A woman in her thirties holds little Jack, 6, by the hand up the stairs of a home. She takes him in a bedroom and starts to undo his pants.

WAYNE (V.O.)
After our mother walks out, our
sick twisted baby sitter abuses
my little brother, for which I
had no earthly idea --

INSERT CUT: Jack, now 13, small town farmer festival, holds a glare on the same woman who now walks around with another little boy. Wayne, late-20s, notices and concerned. **Moments later**, behind a wall of hay young Jack tells Wayne what happened, breaking down, sobbing, Wayne hugging him.

WAYNE (V.O.)
-- and when I do find out, years
later, don't get why I tell
father?

JACK
You know why.

WAYNE
Actually I don't. Never spoke to
me again.

Jack sets the drink down, hard look.

JACK

You took the only thing he ever thought he did right. Not his shit marriage, shit jobs, shit savings. But his boys, and the safety he thought he provided, and flushed it all down.

Jack grabs his drink and reclines back, off look:

JACK (CONT'D)

Didn't know much at 13 but knew that much. Which means you had your head so far up your ass you were blinded by your own shit.

(Beat)

Can only imagine how he kept playing that over and over. Until he drank his liver dead of course.

WAYNE

After mother ran off he wanted to fight the world with a pint in one hand, and a club in the other. Between therapy and jail he chose the 'bottle'. Expeditiously.

JACK

One bitch leaves us stone cold, the other sick and twisted--and he's the one that needs therapy? Get the fuck outta here.

WAYNE

If he hadn't wanted to fight -

JACK

All that cunt shrink ever did was put more blame on a man already suffocating from it. Only choice he had was to fight.

Beat.

JACK (CONT'D)

So yeah--never wanted to speak you again.

Jack sips his drink.

JACK (CONT'D)
And still don't.

WAYNE
Then I owe you one.
(beat)
Reconsider with Lannie. Don't
close the door.

Angered, Jack refers to his brain --

JACK
Think this is a good neighborhood
all of a sudden? Disney Land full
of fun and games?

Wayne looks away.

JACK (CONT'D)
Only me in there. You think I would
let my wife and daughter in there?
What the hell is wrong with you?
Won't ever see that.

WAYNE
They don't need to, they feel it.
Living the same nightmare as you.
Only they don't know why.

Silence.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
You didn't put the monster there.
Yet you insist the fight be
alone. Why? Why not fight it like
you did in the military? With a
team? People who love you?

JACK
I'm the only one "he'll" get, Wayne,
no one else. Done talking about it.

WAYNE
He already did get you, that's
the point.

Jack looks at Wayne.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
And "he'll" keep you until you
stop pushing everyone out. You
never had a chance. Did you
even want one?

JACK

Guess that's why she turned Lannie against me.

WAYNE

She didn't do anything. She reacted.

(beat)

Mental illness is like any other disease. Maybe worse. The way it misleads you, the people who love you. And then gone...without a warning. Leaving us in shambles how we missed the signs.

Silence.

JACK

Wrong person went over the ledge.

To his marrow, Wayne is taken aback. Looks at Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)

Wrong person did everyone a favor.

WAYNE

You lost connection.

Jack's head drops, it was inevitable, fighting his emotions.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

You have to get it back. We're here for only a blink, Jack, and then *pff---*no trace we ever existed. Don't waste it.

(considering)

This is not who you are, Jack. It's a cycle you need to break, and know you can. With help.

Wayne rises, a sense this is it.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

But I have a good feeling that's going to change. When you open your eyes. Take it on like you always have.

(beat)

You're always welcome in London, Brother.

Wayne leaves.

INT. TAXI - PARKED - NIGHT

Wayne jumps in, looks back to the entrance.

TAXI DRIVER (O.S.)
Where to, Sir?

WAYNE
Airport. Thank you.

INT. JACK'S HIGH RISE PENTHOUSE - LANNIE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Door opens, Jack stands at the entrance.

His POV: Lannie's balcony door open, white drapes gently swirling.

Filled with angst she just did what her mother did, Jack's first step is hesitant.

BALCONY

Lannie sits, star gazing, Jack noticeably relieved. Sits on the other side of the balcony. Neither speaks at length.

JACK
Would talk if it was worth it,
but your mind's been made up for
years.

LANNIE
My mother just passed away. So if
you don't mind...

JACK
I do actually. Was well aware of
her good qualities long before you
were born.

Lannie looks away, resentful.

JACK (CONT'D)
Wish we were back in the old
house. The old days.

Not what she was expecting, looks at him.

Jack thinks of another time and takes us with him.

INSERT CUT: Years earlier. Lannie, 6, Jack, early-30s, exit a modest home at the top of the woods that leads down to a creek. Hold hands on the way down, giddy, laughing, joking. Jack hold his cellphone playing music, both bopping their heads.

JACK (V.O.)
 Always listening to those Keane
 songs, 'Somewhere only we know'.

They cross the shallow creek, Jack holds Lannie's hand as she jumps from one rock to the other. LATER. Explore an old cabin.

JACK (V.O.)
 Taking walks only we knew.
 Finding things only we knew.

END CUT --

Jack is somewhere else, Lannie observes him. ...Silence.

JACK
 What I do know are decisions.
 Ones when I was young; older. And
 almost without exception, the
 younger ones were always ill
 informed. Even to this day still
 haunt me.

LANNIE
 I can live with mine -

JACK
 We'll see.

LANNIE
 Tried to buy my love, cheated on
 my mother, and isolated yourself
 for what felt like half my life.
 And you have no "older" regrets?

JACK
 (dry laughs)
 Fucking shrinks.

Angers Lannie.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Every lunch, movie, tickle fight,
 and walk was not a fucking bribe,
 Lannie. What the hell do you two
 talk about? As far as your mother
 goes... Our marriage was on paper
 for so long I don't even remember
 when it was real. Do you? And when
 I was in that 'room'... I always
 fought back to get to you two.
 You don't know what those shadows
 are like and you never will.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

I'll do what your mother did before you see that world. And if I was half the man... Would've done it already. Both know the wrong person is gone.

For the first time, Lannie's eyes seem open to the darkness that consumes him. She's alarmed.

No more to say, Jack leaves.

JACK (O.S.) (CONT'D)

This is your place now.

She starts to speak but stops.

JACK'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jack rinses his face, towels off.

Regarding himself in the mirror, Jack notices small piece of paper sticking out. Picks at it until an ENVELOPE slides out.

'For Jack' written by Michelle. Scared to open.

BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jack sits on the bed, reads the letter.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

Jack... Was thinking about the days when you used to ask me what love was. Would always tell you it was like art, just felt it, saw it. But I think the last few years have refined my thoughts. My conclusion is simple. I think when holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries feel like just another day, it's time to go. Hope you and Lannie work things out. Always- Michelle

Emotional, Jack folds the letter.

INT. EVA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ON LAPTOP: Music video. Linkin Park performing 'Crawling' with Chris Cornell cameo. Eva watches.

Knock at the door. Walks over and checks peephole. Perks up, opening --

EVA
Favorite stranger in the whole
world.

A haggard Jack enters, drifts towards the fridge.

JACK
Is a beer okay?

EVA
Of course.

JACK
Thank you.

KITCHEN

Grabs one from the fridge, twists open, gulps.

JACK (CONT'D)
Hear about the High Rise, the
woman?

Eva did, now devastated to learn it was related. Follows Jack with a heavy heart to the living room.

LIVING ROOM

They sit on the couch, Eva faces him.

JACK (CONT'D)
So much love for someone I didn't
love. Strange?

EVA
No. You cared for her.

JACK
Couldn't stop lying to herself.
Couldn't stand a thing about me.
Couldn't even stand my voice, and
that's the God's honest truth.

Jack's deep breath filled with dejection.

JACK (CONT'D)
Deserved so much more.

EVA
Wanna go for a walk?

Looks at her, this hour?

MOMENTS LATER

Jack stands near the front door. Eva shows up with a stuffed backpack --- adding to his confusion.

EVA (CONT'D)
You were in pararescue for a couple years, right?

JACK
When I was younger of course.

EVA
No fear of heights, adrenaline junkie at times?

JACK
Bloody younger of course.

EVA
Like riding a bike. Let's go.

She's off. Reluctant Jack follows.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Clear night. Jack and Eva walk on the city outskirts.

EVA
So how's Lannie doing?

JACK
(dry laughs)
God love her.

EVA
What?

JACK
She would drown before taking a swimming lesson from me.

EVA
Always that way?

Jack shrugs, it's moot, as they come upon a bridge and cross.

EVA (CONT'D)
Can only imagine how hard it is.
For both of you.

Off Jack's distant nod, Eva stops and slides the backpack off. She's about to change his somber, or die trying.

Slides her sweatpants and shirt off to reveal spandex shorts and a sports bra. Makes everything look sexy. Looks Jack over from head to toe --

EVA (CONT'D)
Whatcha got on underneath?

JACK
If memory serves me right, boxer
briefs, and one gigantic -

EVA
Okay needle dick, this is the
play.

Starts rifling through her bulky backpack --

EVA (CONT'D)
And you got about 30 seconds to
decide.

Eva appears with two flare sticks and sets them down, then stuffs the dry clothes, blanket, everything back in the backpack, loops it over her back.

Eva hands one flare to Jack and keeps the other as she climbs up onto the rafter. She is going to jump.

Jack looks over the edge, only darkness below.

EVA (CONT'D)
You were lying about the heights
thing? Adrenaline rush?

JACK
When I was bloody younger of
course!

EVA
Are you a man?

JACK
A man with a gigantic -

EVA
Show time, pig-in-a-blanket.

Eva pops the flare producing a strong RED FLAME.

JACK
Alright, goddammit.

Emboldened, Jack pops the flare, climbs up with her. Elderly couple in a car slowly passes, mouths agape. Eva and Jack salute with the burning flares. Car speeds off.

EVA

Okay, here's the deal. It's about 50 feet below. We should be okay.

JACK

These have oxidizers I take it?

EVA

To burn the magnesium of course.

JACK

And we should be okay?

EVA

Mostly.

JACK

Mostly? What the fuck is mostly?

EVA

Jack- You can put your left foot in, or your left foot out. But me? I've got shit to shake all about.

She jumps.

EVA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(re: Pink Floyd)

If you don't eat your meat, you can't have pudding! How can you have your pudding, if you -

Loud SPLASH O.S!

EXT. UNDER WATER - CONTINUOUS

Flare burning bright, Eva is a portrait of red beauty.

SWOOSH- Jack slices by her like a nautical sword.

Manages to get himself in front of her, sharing smiles. Gives her a peck on the lip. A thank you more than romance. Then Eva yells, 'you can't have your pudding!' Swim for the surface.

EXT. RIVER BANK - NIGHT

Small camp fire burns, their wet clothes dry.

JACK (O.S.)
Well that's something I don't do
every day.

Thin blankets wrapped around Jack and Eva.

EVA
(like a movie, wry)
You're not, seeing anyone on a
regular basis are ya?

Jack smiles.

JACK
Thanks, Eva.

She gets the magnitude, solemn nod.

INT. JACK'S HIGH RISE PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

HALLWAY

Jack's hair mildly damp, still glowing, thinking about...

JACK
Eva, eva, bo-beva, banana -

Lannie's door is half open causing his eyes to squint. Her door is never open. Instant **TERROR** when he peeks in, rushing in, Lannie face down on the floor.

LANNIE'S BEDROOM

Holding her head up --

JACK (CONT'D)
No, no, no, no, no, no.

Empty Ambien prescription bottle next to her. Grabs her wrist for a pulse while grabbing cellphone, tapping 911 emergency, phone to ear --

JACK (CONT'D)
Lannie, goddammit.

MONTAGE - SPECK OF TIME COMES TO AN END

1) JACK'S PENTHOUSE - LANNIE'S BEDROOM. Jack tossing the cell, hugging Lannie's limp body tight, crying, imploring.

2) JACK'S PENTHOUSE - LANNIE'S BEDROOM. Paramedics feverishly working on Lannie. Police talking to a numb Jack.

3) HOSPITAL. Lannie in bed, unconscious. IV in arm. Vitals on machine: 120/75. Jack seated in corner, exhausted, watching nurse check Lannie's vitals.

4) MENTAL WELLNESS RETREAT ESTATE. 40 acres of lush private property. People on walks, park benches. Family outings.

5) MENTAL WELLNESS SANITARIUM MAIN QUARTER. Jack signing forms, Lannie dazed, observing communal living, sad patients. When she looks back, Jack stares at her, sadly. He leaves.

6) OFFICE. Jack's corporate leaders - Helen, Karthik, David, Frank, Anne, and Angel digesting the news. Numbness.

7) TRAIN - PRIVATE ROOM - MOVING. Unshaven, a numb Jack takes in the passing scenery. Dressed like he's going on an excursion. Cargo pants. Sweatshirt. Trail boots.

8) SPORTING STORE. Jack loading up for this excursion. Rucksack. Compact tent. Knife. Sleeping bag. Lantern. Flint. Flashlight. Compact fishing pole. Crossbow. Etc.

9) FOREST. Jack, bulging rucksack, more facial stubble, beginning to enter vast forest range. THICK BEARDED CABBIE looks on. Jumps back in the cab and drives off.

10) STARBUCKS. Eva swiping customer's credit card. After a forced smile, looks to the door. Sighs. Where's Jack? When Angel walks in, spirits improved. LATER. Her and Angel at a table. Eva sad from the news.

11) RIVER SAND BANK. Jack fishing. Sitting on rock, small fire burning, watching setting sun.

12) MENTAL WELLNESS SANITARIUM RETREAT HAVEN. Lannie, keeping a distance from everyone. Long walks on the grounds. Staff members watching from afar. Not ready to talk.

13) RIVER BANK. Black pan with fish remnants. Camp fire burning. Jack watching another setting sun, beard forming.

14) FOREST. Jack hiking deeper to nowhere. Mountainous steep pitch. Strong strides.

15) FOREST. Jack kneeled against tree, cross bow aimed. LATER. Jack eating small kill. Camp fire burning. Small camouflaged one-man tent in B.G.

16) OFFICE. Jack's corporate team celebrating the DoE opportunity win - Angel and David sharing a private moment. Shaking hands. All wishing Jack was there to celebrate.

- 17) MENTAL WELLNESS SANITARIUM - GROUP TALK. Lannie participating. Spirits improving, a smile. Quickly straightens. Group Therapist noticing.
- 18) MENTAL WELLNESS SANITARIUM - LANNIE'S SLEEPING ROOM. Group Therapist with Lannie, chemistry developing.
- 19) MENTAL WELLNESS SANITARIUM - GROUP TALK. Lannie participating, enjoying herself. When she laughs, again quickly straightens. She leaves. Therapist sighs.
- 20) MENTAL WELLNESS SANITARIUM - OUTSIDE GROUNDS. Sunny day. Lannie and Therapist walking. Mutual nodding, listening, Lannie looking more upbeat.
- 21) MENTAL WELLNESS SANITARIUM - GROUP TALK. Upbeat group session, Lannie smiling, this time holding. Therapist nodding, 'you're getting there'.
- 22) FOREST. Powerful storm in progress. Jack lying inside tent, coughing hard, sickly. Thick overhead trees slowing rain but not by much.
- 23) The THICK BEARDED CABBIE entering a FISH, WILDLIFE, and PARKS administration building. INSIDE. Talking to receptionist, concerned.
- 24) HELICOPTER LIFE SUPPORT. A chopper overhead, JACK'S TENT in thick brush. LATER. Two paramedics jumping from the chopper, one checking Jack's tent. Comes out, head shaking.
- 25) MENTAL WELLNESS SANITARIUM - LANNIE'S SLEEPING ROOM. Lannie, reading, looking great. Therapist appears, sad. Lannie listening...bursting into tears. Therapist holding her.
- 26) OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM. Suited official delivering bad news to Frank, Helen, Anne, David, Karthik, and Angel. Young Ben bursting in tears.
- 27) STARBUCKS. Chipper Eva handing customer their drink, when a sad Angel enters. Her face falls.
- 28) JACK'S PENTHOUSE. With her back against the patio door, exactly as her mother used to do, Lannie looks sadly at her home. Hands resting ominously on door handle. Her head drops, then her body and goes to the ground. Sobs.
- 29) JACK'S PENTHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT. Lannie stares sadly at the old breakfast table, the three empty chairs. Tears stream down her cheeks.
- 30) HOSPITAL MORGUE. Dim. Jack's body on table covered by a sheet. Dim room becoming dimmer...FADING TO BLACK.

ON BLACK.

PRE LAP: Faint, blips. *Blip- Blip- Blip- Blip-*

JACK (V.O.)
One of these days I'm gonna
faint in the wrong place.

MARIE (V.O.)
Sweet beauty of a coma, kid.

FLASHBACK--INT. JACK'S HIGH RISE PENTHOUSE - SAUNA - DAY

Jack sitting, sweaty, towel covering lower half. Time to go, sets book down, exits.

JACK (V.O.)
Who said anything about that?

INT. JACK'S HIGH RISE PENTHOUSE - SAUNA ROOM - DAY

This is the SECOND TIME we saw Jack at the top of the lush stairwell, incurring dizzy spell, rubbing forehead...

PRE LAP: *BLIP- BLIP-*

MARIE (V.O.)
Stands to reason if you faint in
the wrong place, it ain't gonna
be pretty. Behind the wheel of a
car...

Dizziness passes, walks down and slips, which we should recall was thwarted by Jack grabbing the handrail tightly.

But that's all someone in a coma would recall, as Jack in reality, falls violently down the stairs, bloody landing.

MARIE (V.O.)
Walking down some stairs...

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Ambulance Techs wheel Jack in on the gurney, Hospital staff takes over. Michelle and Lannie in tow, nervous wrecks.

THICK BANDAGING around Jack's head, dry blood on his face.

JACK (V.O.)
And the good thing about that?

MARIE (V.O.)
A break from the conscious.

MONTAGE - JACK'S COMA

1) HOSPITAL ROOM. Comatose, Jack wheeled into private room, Lannie and Michelle in tow, two nurses setting up IV bag, BP machine.

MARIE (V.O.)
...doing what Freud said.

2) HOSPITAL ROOM. Days going by. The only thing changing are Michelle's and Lannie's clothes. They stand over him, talking gently -- when Jack thought he was losing his mind hearing their voices.

LANNIE
Dad...

MICHELLE
Jack.... We're here.

MARIE (V.O.)
Dreaming...

3) HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY. Nurse giving new IV bag, recording Jack's vitals. Lannie and Michelle watching.

MARIE (V.O.)
...about all the lovely things we
suppress...repress.

4) HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY. Jack's doctor checking in, talking to Lannie and Michelle, not good, not bad. Michelle and Lannie walking over after he leaves, speaking to comatose Jack.

WAYNE (V.O.)
This is not who you are, Jack.
It's a cycle you need to break.

5) HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT. Lannie and Michelle asleep. Jack's condition unchanged.

PRE LAP: BLIP- BLIP-

WAYNE (V.O.)
But I have a good feeling that's
going to change.

Jack's arm starting to move, Lannie awaking, tapping Michelle to awake, gesturing to Jack's movement. Both walk to Jack's bed. And as Jack's eyes open...

WAYNE (V.O.)
When you open your eyes.

Jack's foggy POV: Lannie, Michelle, emotional.

The *BLIP* comes from Jack's steady vitals.

JACK
(groggy)
I heard you. Everything.

They cover their mouths, tears flowing.

And as the enormity of the situation overtakes Jack, covers his face and sobs.

INT. PRIVATE HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Asleep, Jack awakes to see he's alone as the nurse wheels the IV bag away.

NURSE
Your daughter and wife wanted me to let you know they'll be back around lunch time.

JACK
Um... Miss...

NURSE
Yes?

She seems to know the source of his hesitance.

NURSE (CONT'D)
If we have a Therapist on staff?

Given his life long hatred of Shrinks, hard for Jack to nod.

NURSE (CONT'D)
One floor down.

JACK
Thank you.

INT. HOSPITAL THERAPIST OFFICE - LATER

Female therapist, JAN, 40s, weighs her words. Jack sits across.

THERAPIST JAN

Firstly, there are countless people who will swear to their graves they not only dreamt in their coma, it actually felt like another time, place, a different world. And when they did emerge, felt like a violent pull from the other side.

She pauses for Jack. He stays quiet.

THERAPIST JAN (CONT'D)

Annie Shapiro was in a coma for 29 years. She not only dreamt, she longed. First thing she said when she awoke was "turn on I Love Lucy". But I think you were also psychologically projecting.

INSERT CUTS: All the moments after Jack's second dizzy spell when he fell, where he began "projecting" his unknowns, desires, fears, and hopes.

THERAPIST JAN (V.O.)

In its worse form, our egos defend against negative aspects our 'self' denies or blames onto others. In those moments where you weren't a participant, you were projecting those defenses like a 'specter' or a fly on the wall. Like this man named Chris you were seeing with Michelle -- your ego and self were in conflict because there's a side of you that blames her, and a side of you that wants her to be happy.

JACK

And Eva?

INSERT CUTS: The nice moments with Eva, Angel. The good vibes at work. Jack and Ben running through the streets.

THERAPIST JAN (V.O.)

The positive side of your projections--things you hope for. You continued those things in your life whether they were relative strangers like Angel, Pam, and Eva, or people closest like your family, work colleagues, even your competitor...

JACK
DeMeco, yes. Love that guy.

THERAPIST JAN
You projected everything. Fears,
desires, hope, anger, love,
everything.

END CUTS--

Off Jack's ambivalence --

THERAPIST JAN (CONT'D)
Can delve deeper if you want but
this is the simplest way -

JACK
No. Thanks.

Beat.

JACK (CONT'D)
Not the biggest fan of your
community.

THERAPIST JAN
I think your projections bear
that out.

Both take it good naturedly.

THERAPIST JAN (CONT'D)
But... There is one thing you
need to address--that goes to the
beginning--the women in your
life. You need to talk to your
wife and daughter about it. And
when you do, don't be surprised
what happens.

JACK
What will happen?

THERAPIST JAN
They'll become lions over you, what
happened to you. It's what the
Pride does. Protects you.
(beat)
If you let them.

INT. JACK'S HIGH RISE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON, Lannie, Michelle. Staring at someone O.S with
immense doubt, scrutiny. ...It's Jan.

Jack sits next to Jan facing Michelle and Lannie.

MICHELLE
You're a real therapist?

THERAPIST JAN
I am.

LANNIE
And he knows that?

Jan looks at Jack grinning.

THERAPIST JAN
He does.

LANNIE
Board certified -

THERAPIST JAN
With all the trimmings and
degrees --- yes.

Lannie and Michelle indulge this woman as improbable as it seems.

THERAPIST JAN (CONT'D)
If it's okay, thought I would
start with the easy stuff and work
our way down. Quick version or
long version?

Jack, Lannie, and Michelle look at each other.

LANNIE/MICHELLE/JACK
Quick.

THERAPIST JAN
It's safe to say like many before
him, Jack's cerebral damage was
not severe enough to prohibit
brain and memory activity. And I
think in his dreams, he resolved
a lot.

Beat.

THERAPIST JAN (CONT'D)
I think if everyone here can
accept a little blame over the
last few years, is that possible?

Tacit nods.

THERAPIST JAN (CONT'D)
 Jack has to address his mental
 illness. Not apologize for it,
 but address it. Needs you two
 behind him, and unlike before,
 think he knows you are.

Jan regards Jack.

THERAPIST JAN (CONT'D)
 There was a monster in there...

She looks to Lannie, Michelle --

THERAPIST JAN (CONT'D)
 ...for a long time. Spawned by
 very real events. And while I
 think "it's" gone now, old habits
 can be hard to break.
 (looks to Jack)
 What do you think?

JACK
 Should've addressed this sooner, I
 know.
 (beat)
 But what I do know is I'm not going
 to close the door anymore. There's
 people I can trust. I know I can
 trust you. Sorry it took so long.

The silence filled with anxiety.

LANNIE
 We'll be ready when you are. Doesn't
 have to be right now. We've been
 through enough shit lately.

Much needed tension reliever, dry laughs.

Without notice, an emotional Lannie rushes for her father.
 Jack rises to hug her, something he was never expecting.

LANNIE (CONT'D)
 Love you, Dad.

JACK
 Love you too.

Jack nods to a teary Michelle, his heaven on earth.

Jack, Lannie, and Michelle sit together on the sofa.

THERAPIST JAN
And that's the short version.

Jan rises.

THERAPIST JAN (CONT'D)
(to Jack)
See you in about a week?

Off Jack's nod --

THERAPIST JAN (CONT'D)
(to Lannie, Michelle)
And you two are welcome anytime.

LANNIE
Those colleges were -

THERAPIST JAN
Accredited. Yes.

Jan smiles and leaves.

Silence. Someone say something...for the love of God!

JACK
I got a great idea.

Off Lannie's and Michelle's intrigue, Jack rises and leads them to the small table for three in the kitchen. Jack pulls out his chair. Lannie does the same. Michelle does the same.

JACK (CONT'D)
Who's got eggs, bacon, french
toast?

LANNIE
Bacon.

MICHELLE
Eggs.

JACK
Let's get to work.

EXT. STARBUCKS - MORNING

Casually dressed, Jack is hesitant to enter. Last time he saw Eva...pre-coma...was a prick. After a deep breath, onward.

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

Jack enters. Behind the register Eva hands a customer their receipt. Seeing Jack, she instantly waves an employee over to help him. Jack rushes over --

JACK
I'm sorry for being rude the last time.

She hears him out. Yes, she looks beautiful.

JACK (CONT'D)
There's no explanation other than being a total asshole.

EVA
Did the other nut drop?

JACK
It did. And thanks for asking.

Jack suddenly bumped by Angel, who apologizes.

JACK (CONT'D)
(to Angel)
No- No- No- That's okay. Before my accident -

Jack stops himself, sees how odd that sounds to Eva.

JACK (CONT'D)
What I mean is...I see you do those interesting nodals on the subway windows, right?

With faux arrogance, Angel shoots a look to Eva, see?

ANGEL
Yes, that would be me. Always a pleasure to be noticed.

JACK
Brother, not only did I notice... One might say I even dreamt about it.

Referring to corner table --

JACK (CONT'D)
Can we talk over there?

ANGEL
Believe I can fit that in. What
are we projecting? Hour? Hour and
a half?

JACK
10 minutes.

ANGEL
Even better.

Angel walks to the table.

JACK
No problem.
(voce sotto)
One down.

EVA
Excuse me?

JACK
Nothing.

ON Jack: Hesitant. Conjuring bravery.

JACK (CONT'D)
Do you think... Ah never mind,
it's dumb, I'll just --

EVA
What?

JACK
I'll just take a dry cappuccino.

Eva refers to the small crowd:

EVA
Look around-- This is the best
day to be dumb. What was it?

JACK
Would you like to go out?

A question she's heard since birth. Wry:

EVA
How old are you?

JACK
Oh shit. Bye.

EVA
Wait, I was just -

Jack heads for the door --

JACK
Everything is fine, no worries.

Gives Angel his business card like a rolling car:

JACK (CONT'D)
Call me tomorrow, or just come to
that address, okay?

ANGEL
Sure Jack.

Jack out the door like a wind shear.

EXT. STARBUCKS - CONTINUOUS

Jack checks his watch, head shaking.

EVA (O.S.)
Will you wait!

Jack turns around.

EVA (CONT'D)
I only asked your age because
I've got this illness that
prevents me from getting too
serious. I've been told, it's
congenital.

JACK
So we can go out maybe?

EVA
I'm here aren't I?

INT. OFFICE QUARTERS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Tremendous buzz...Jack is back. The crew around the horseshoe
table. Frank. Helen. David. Anne. Karthik. Ben. Angel. Pam.

DAVID
Want to go first, Boss?

JACK
Sure, but want everyone to meet
Angel first.

No hoodie on in this parallel, Angel wears a nice suit.

ANGEL

Hello.

Warm greetings from the team.

JACK

Angel will be leading our new Strategic Solutions division. It's cross cutting which means all of you will meet him quickly.

(to Angel)

Would you like to say anything buddy?

ANGEL

Happy to be aboard.

JACK

(over their applause)

Guy was in color commentary, amazing. Alright, so congrats to everyone for the big win, how the hell did we pull that off?

PAM

It was a best value contract where price was not the most important thing. Whoever DeMeco supported is not happy.

JACK

Maybe he's not all that bad.

Off everyone's look --

JACK (CONT'D)

Comas have their limits?

They all chime to the affirmative.

JACK (CONT'D)

Well regardless, this was a game changer for us. We're a 'mid' now. The 'Bigs' are gonna court us now like the proper babes we are.

FRANK

And with that, Jack, we have several ideas we would like to present you today--tremendous growth potential.

JACK
Right into it---excellent.

HELEN
A great training aspect with
cutting edge information systems.

JACK
Training?

Jack's all time cringe word.

KARTHIK
(melodramatic)
Your hesitation, Sir, is justified.

JACK
Look- If you guys think it's worth
another re-attack, I'm game. Just
don't tell me it's-

Ben rushes in---*amped to the tits!*

JACK (CONT'D)
Oh, bloody hell.

BEN
Boss, trust us. You're gonna love
this one.

ANNE (O.S.)
Oh wait.
(eyes on Anne)
We got a pricing strategist to
help maximize our partner deals.

Anne waives in a LADY outside the conference room blocked by
the GLASS WALL's etchings.

Marie walks in. Jack, fully, watches her take a seat.

JACK
Riiight...

ANNE
You two know each other?

JACK
Marie- You didn't disclose we have
a current pricing relationship?

MARIE
That's for technical experts,
Mr. Weiland. This is for the
strategy side.

JACK
What the hell's the difference?

MARIE
Not much really. Let's continue.

Jack takes a moment to go around the room to regard his
expanded team. *...This is going to be interesting.*

After a big breath, Jack leans back.

JACK
Okay, Ben. What do you got?

THE END.